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CHARLES TOWNSHEND.

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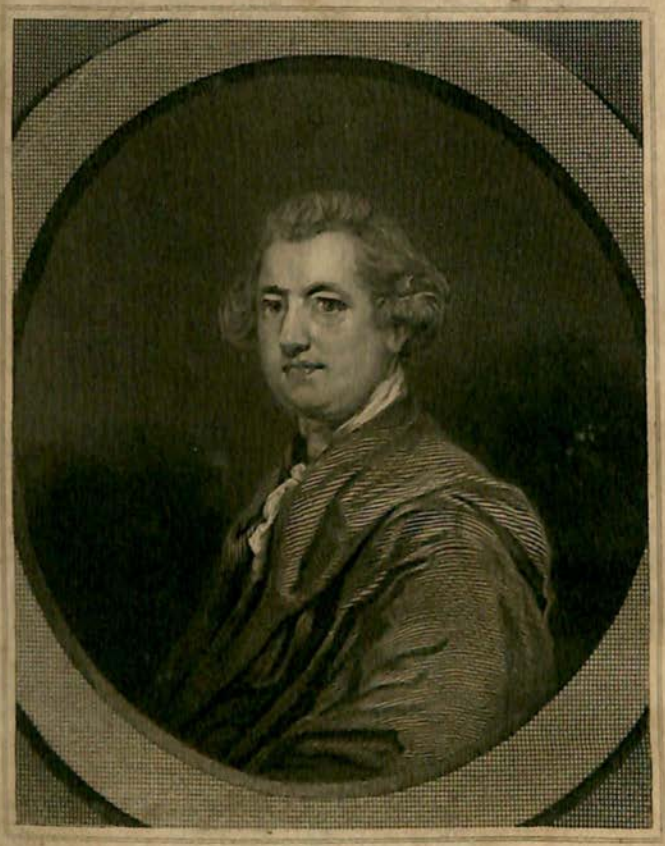

CHARLES TOWNSHEND,

WIT AND STATESMAN.

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A., M.R.I.A.,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF STERNE," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," ETC.

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The following Life

OF

AN ENGLISH CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH GREAT RESPECT AND ADMIRATION,

TO THE

RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, M.P.

PREFACE.

THE glimpses which readers of "Walpole," and of histories like Mr. Forster's exhaustive life of Goldsmith, obtain of the brilliant man who is the hero of the following pages, are of a very tantalizing sort, and must have often prompted a wish for further acquaintance with one whose entrance on the stage seems to light up the dull round of political reading. These glimpses have, indeed, about them something almost fascinating. He steps on the stage as gay and airy as a French light comedian.

It might have been felt, also, that there was little more to be known or recovered. But some careful searching soon showed the writer, not only that there were plenty of

fragments to make an almost complete restoration of the entire figure, but that without such a restoration a great deal in the politics of the time would be left unintelligible. The reader will be surprised to find, as perhaps he now will for the first time, what a serious influence the name of "Mr. Charles Townshend" exercised in the shuffles of parties during the twelve years between 1754 and 1766.

It would be impossible to give the history of Charles Townshend's career without at the same time exhibiting the strange series of intrigues and the tangled politics with which that career is bound up. Indeed, the story of his singular "fluctuations" would be incomplete without the background of shifting ministries and official honours, which were the baits that seduced him into such fluctuations. Besides, with so dramatic a figure in the centre, it seemed a favourable opportunity for detailing the secret offices and meaner agencies by which such changes were

brought about. These things are inseparable from the life of Charles Townshend, and so far as I am aware have never been related in a connected shape before. I think, too, credit may be taken for introducing two portraits, which, for colour and minute detail, may be said to be almost new to the reader: that of the old Duke of Newcastle, and of "The Great Commoner." A subsidiary aim all through has been to make the study of the politics of this time more agreeable and less abstract and heavy; and the airy centre figure of Charles Townshend seemed to promise an opening, and would itself carry a heavier subject "through." Wherever he appears on the stage everything becomes dramatic and unconventional.

I have forborne to load the page with references and authorities, as the student of his time will readily know what I have had to consult. The heavy "Grenville Papers;" the "Chatham Correspondence;" the various works of Almon; the "Rockingham Cor-

respondence;" the "Bedford Papers;" the "Life of Lord Hardwicke;" Walpole's "Mémoires and Letters;" and the magazines and newspapers of the time—have been all, as might be guessed, carefully examined—to say nothing of smaller and less pretentious storehouses. In this examination it was curious to find how certain bald and all but unintelligible statements in the "Grenville Papers" became quite clear and significant when put beside others—in, say, the "Chatham Letters."

On the whole, it is hoped that the life of one so brilliant and mercurial, so utterly unconventional in all his political behaviour—whose *bonhomie* and candour and "wearing of his heart upon his sleeve" redeemed many failings—will be found not unentertaining to the reader.

DOUGLAS. *August*, 1866.

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CHARLES TOWNSHEND,

WIT AND STATESMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE TOWNSHEND FAMILY.

In the early part of the last century, it was still the custom for a few Scotch and English families to send their sons across the sea, to one of the little Dutch universities, whose repute had not yet dwindled away. The Scotch had generally some kinsman or friend, in trade, upon the banks of the Scheldt, or on the canals of Utrecht or Leyden; and English youths might be tempted over by even that little stretch of travel, at a time when the grand tour with a tutor was considered the perfection of polish, and the last touch and finish

to genteel education. Even twenty years later Utrecht had some name in the Civil Law, and Mr. Boswell, after being paid a surprising compliment by his great friend, who journeyed down to Harwich to see him off, pursued his studies there for some time.

Nearly twenty years, however, before that time, there was a perfect little colony, both of English and Scotch youths, at Leyden; and through the quaint and narrow streets of that Dutch town, which looked then much as it does now, with the brightest of red bricks, and clusters of frantic chimneys and housetops, that rose almost in stairs, some promising young men, who afterwards turned out of mark, met each other, and drank, and quarrelled. In this odd gathering were no less than three future politicians; and a young Scotchman, just arrived and wandering of a Sunday on the great circular walk of the town, which formed a bank of the Rhine, was struck by a singular English youth of eighteen, whose face was so strikingly ugly, that the Scotchman asked earnestly who he was. He was told that this was the son of a London distiller or brewer, and that he was panting to become a gentleman

—a change that was out of the question, said the informant, as God and nature were both against him. But the ugly youth knew his own gifts better; did actually become a gentleman, fine both in tastes and in company; and lived to say that, for all his ugliness, he was but a quarter of an hour behind the handsomest man in England. This, it will be guessed, was young Wilkes, the future radical; who even then, in the little university town, was showing some of his daring profligacy. He was excellent company, sprightly, entertaining, but restrained by a strange tutor, who shocked him into general disbelief by striving to teach him Arianism. There was also another youth, Dowdeswell, afterwards to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the line of solemn political pedants who are useful as a relief for brilliant statesmen. Of the company, too, were an Irish O'Keefe, some more Scotchmen, and West Indians, who all lived together very cheerfully, giving each other suppers, and unconsciously training each other for the smart verbal skirmishing of debate, and of the world. Sometimes they ran up to the Hague, then a delightful little Paris, with the tapestries and decorations fitted out

for the sovereigns and ministers who came for the congress at Utrecht, as yet hardly faded: and there they got to court balls, and wore fine suits of white silver, and had their heads turned by dancing with a Princess of Waldeck.

But witty and lively as Wilkes was, he was outshone by a young man about a year older, who was also of the set — a well-favoured, striking-looking, noisy, and vivacious creature. He was full of gaiety and humour; had a loud boisterous laugh, and, when humour was failing, fell back upon some good powers of mimicry. In short, he was stored with those gifts which unbounded spirits often supply; and above all, it was noticed, had a singular turn for what might be called a sort of conversational larceny, so that he would reproduce, with extraordinary truth, the thoughts and ideas of his friends, in language of his own. But this language was so choice, so gay, so elevated, so musical to the ear, as well as sound to the understanding, that all who listened were charmed, and those who were so pillaged did not know their own. It was, in fact, a different procedure from that described in the

well-known simile of literary gipsies disfiguring the children they stole to hide their thefts. He made them so beautiful that they became unrecognisable. Even at this age was acknowledged that sweetness of voice and that melody of intonation which was to charm the English House. The name of this Englishman was Charles Townshend, a younger son of a noble family, of good possessions and political influence. It was not a little remarkable that he and Wilkes should have thus begun life together; which, too, may in part account for the side the statesman long after took in reference to the bitter persecution of the future radical.

One night, at a little supper, when in more than usual spirits, and casting about for game, he directed his wit on a slow, heavy Scotchman, named James Johnstone. On this butt he was very merry, perhaps in proportion as the Scotchman seemed more and more unconscious of the mirth he was provoking. The wit even took the company into his confidence, by that rather coarse auxiliary of humour—a motion of putting his tongue in his cheek. But still the Scotchman took the whole

seriously—did not see the entertainment he was causing; and the company separated, no doubt in high good-humour with the Englishman who had made them so merry.

But in the morning another Scot, of a very different pattern, a man of the world, a shrewd observer, and full of warmth and geniality—a man, too, who has left us some delightful memoirs from which these details are taken*—was sent for betimes to Charles Townshend's. He found him pale and anxious. He said he had been up very late, and had been very ill, and then showed him a letter just received from the butt of the night before.

A friend to whom some of Charles's smart shafts had glanced, had opened the Scot's eyes to the part he had been made to play, and Johnstone now demanded "satisfaction." Charles asked his visitor earnestly, had he ever ridiculed Johnstone behind his back, or in company? and the other said, that beyond a little harmless raillery, he never had. The question was, what was to be done? Charles did not dream of fighting, for he had no quarrel with Johnstone, who was a good

* Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk.

and a good-natured fellow. Carlyle advised promptness, either in making the matter up, or in arranging a meeting. He also counselled finding out the mischief-maker, and dealing with him summarily. This comfort, which would have been after Sir Lucius's heart, or would have come more appropriately from O'Keefe, and some of the Irish gentlemen, only left Townshend in a very irresolute state. He, however, made it up—but it was thought a little pusillanimous that he and Johnstone should go round the town together, calling on each member of their little community, to know if he ever heard Mr. Townshend ridicule Mr. Johnstone. Every one of course said he had not. And thus the matter was accommodated. But it left an unfavourable impression; and, indeed, the jester, who after long service is called to account by some slow, stupid being who will not be trifled with, always makes a pitiable show. Long after, during the weaker portions of Charles's career, where he showed indecision and lamentable unsteadiness, this was called to mind.

And yet without much straining it would

bear a favourable construction. The paleness and nervousness which his friend discovered might be placed to the account of those fits or convulsions, to which it was known he was subject even then. That open parading round the town, and questioning of the friends, seems more the indiscreet anxiety of an impetuous man to repair a seeming wrong than the abject submission of a coward. Such do not proclaim their submission in the open thoroughfares; or, if they have any craft, take care to make good terms. But Townshend appears to have been needlessly submissive. It seems more likely that he was really sorry for having hurt a dull, blunt, honest Scotchman, who was a good fellow, and that he was foolishly anxious to prove to him in every way that he had no intention of wounding him, beyond a little harmless raillery. This little glimpse of English students at a Dutch college is almost a picture; and walking only the other day through the old streets with the burnished flaring houses, and by the green canals, where lie moored the Dutch varnished vessels, with what seem huge wooden wings folded to their sides, it seemed to the writer so ancient and

so unchanged, that at the very next turn, Townshend and the noisy foreign students might come round, and cross the little bridge over the canal.

Very soon after, he left the Dutch university, and returned home to his family. How strange and fitful the members of that family were we shall now see.

The brilliant son had a brilliant mother. The third Marquis Townshend, who did not rise higher than the mild eminence of a Lordship of the Bedchamber, had married a "Miss Harrison of Balls," whose father had enjoyed the patronage of William III., and had amassed moneys sufficient to leave her an heiress. Her Christian name was Audrey, which she later fancifully changed to Ethelreda, and she had five children, of whom Charles was the second.

This extraordinary lady was notorious in London for her free speech and her freer manners. She had long been separated from her husband, and ranged society, a miracle of fearlessness and beauty—remarkable, too, for the almost lawlessness of her conversational

powers. There is a freshness and *naïveté* about her speeches, above all a clear spontaneity and absence of the artificial, that gives them quite a special character of their own. There may be nothing neat or elaborate about them, like the reported sayings of titular French female wits, but there is a brusqueness and directness which recalls the effect of a kindred humour, so delightfully described by Charles Lamb; which "has all at once come out with something so whimsical and yet so pertinent; so brazen in its pretensions, yet so impossible to be denied; so exquisitely good and so deplorably bad at the same time, that it has proved a Robin Hood's shot." No wonder that Walpole actually revelled in her sayings, and went carefully after her in her footsteps, when he could not be with her himself, gathering them all up diligently.

She was a wild, irregular lady of quality, full of flashes and spasms, in which there was yet a certain consistency. She had violent crazes, the most amusing of which was her theatrical passion for Lord Kilmarnock, whom she only saw at his trial, fascinated, Walpole says, by his "falling shoulders." She used

to be seen under his windows; managed to get possession of his dog and snuff-boxes, and sent him messages. She got people to promise they would not sleep for a whole night for his sake; and in return told Lord Hervey, "never trust me more, if I am not as yellow as a jonquil for his sake!" These things, when reported, gave great delight to the town. She was heard to say gravely, that since seeing Lord Kilmarnock she really thought no more of "Sir Harry Nisbet, than if there was no such man in the world." She gave up English. Selwyn came to dine with her, and was letting off some Selwyn squibs upon the execution, when he was amazed by her bursting into a passion of tears and fury, and her pouring out upon him a volley of reproaches, saying that she now believed all that his father and mother had said of him, and then rushed from the room. Mr. Selwyn, however, coolly made her maid, Dorcas, sit down with him and finish the bottle, which gives us a glimpse of the polite faithlessness and disloyalty of all fashionable society of the time, which felt itself bound by no law of secrecy, but told

everything it saw and heard, that was likely to purchase a laugh. Even Mr. Selwyn's well known jesting on the execution was scarcely in the best taste. It was also maliciously whispered that the wardens of the Tower had palmed off on her a little boy about the place as one of Lord Kilmarnock's sons, and this child she had taken into her house, to the amusement of her friends.

Another of her fancies was Mr. Winnington, one of the minor politicians, who, like Rigby and others, were born for the Pay Office or the Board of Trade. Over this official, who had inexhaustible good-humour, and a wit singularly ready, she exercised extraordinary influence; and having quarrelled with all her husband's family, and quarrelling with her husband, she contrived to drag him into a duel with her half-brother, Augustus, "a pert boy," and captain of an Indiaman. They went to Hyde Park on a Sunday morning, says Walpole, photographing the scene, "scratched one another's fingers, tumbled into two ditches—that is, Augustus did—kissed, and walked home together again." This Winnington, whom it was "impossible to

hate or to trust," soon after died, actually "blooded" to death by a quack of his day. Not long after, at a party, when she was "coquetting" eagerly with Lord Baltimore, that nobleman is reported to have said to her, with the politeness of a true fine gentleman, "that if she meant anything serious, he was not inclined; but if she wanted him for the purpose of making anybody jealous, he could afford to throw away an hour on her, with all his heart."

Some time after, Augustus wished to fight Lord Albemarle, but was arrested on the ground by an officer, like Jeffrey and Thomas Little, and not long after died. He, however, furnished his half-sister with an opening for a good thing, when, pulling off her black gloves at the opera, she found her fingers discoloured by the dye. She held them up to friends, with the apt quotation from Œdipus, "My hands are guilty, but my *heart* is free!"

Her friend and admirer, Walpole, used to say that she was above her generation, and had to wrap up her wit "in plain English" to be understood.

It has been mentioned how he delighted in

her company and sayings. She would come bursting in on him at Strawberry Hill, rush all through the house, exploring, and enliven her exploration with the drollest commentary. We can see her struggling up the little stair, all but sweeping away the china monsters, and hear her saying to the owner, "Lord God, what a house! It is just such a house as the parson's, where the children all sleep at the foot of the bed!" We can hear, too, these gossips sitting down together to discuss a piece of authentic scandal. "But was there proof?" said Horace, doubtfully, on some wicked anecdote being told. "Proof?" said Lady Ethelreda, "she was proof all over."

She pronounced that Strawberry Hill would be a very pleasant place if that Mrs. Clive's face did not "*rise upon* it, and make it so hot;" and she liked Mr. Walpole's company, because they could bring their little scraps of scandal together and compare them, and because, as she said of some one who lived with him, any one who was in his house *must* be in spirits, because he himself was spirit of hartshorn. She was good-natured enough to bring to the wit a rare and precious morsel—the "articles"

in the Duchess of Beaufort's divorce, which she had copied, and where "*everything was proved* to your heart's content."

The men and women about her were witty enough, but they could scarcely have matched some of her lively, bold, and almost impudent speeches, so sudden and ready, too, it must be recollected; as when she heard her husband, from whom she was separated, rise at Lord Balmerino's trial, and say, "Guilty, on my honour;" she whispered to her neighbour, "I knew my lord was *guilty*, but never thought he would own it *on his honour*." Or, as when old Lord Bath complained of a pain in his side, she said, with sly sarcasm, "O that can't be, you have *no side!*" This was to be stolen later, and turned against her son. Or when she said of the royal family, who took a fancy for going to suppers and to all the public shows, "This is the cheapest family to see, and the dearest to keep, that ever was." Nothing could be better than her reply to the lady who asked if it was true that Whitfield had recanted. "No, madam, he has only canted." Or her natural speech, when rallied about taking a villa at Tyburn, of all places

in the world, she saying it was a neighbourhood that could never tire, because they were "*hanged every week.*" Or her pleasant speech on hearing of Lady Pembroke's marrying an officer in the army, that "she must engage her captain at once, against her lord's death, lest they should all be picked up." So, too, with her insolent speech to the lady who complained of being obliged to have an issue made at one side of her head, when Lady Townshend stated that a certain architect had advised another on the other side "for the sake of symmetry."

These specimens have much of the nature, and all the "fresh air," as it may be called, of Sydney Smith's jests. This gay woman lived to be a very old lady, giving evening parties at her house in Whitehall, receiving Selwyn and other wits; and though once near dying (when "she took prayers"), she lived to be eighty-seven years old, and left an enormous fortune (says Sir Nathaniel Wraxall) to her grandson, Lord John Townshend.

Another son of this lively mother was George Townshend—heartily disliked by both his parents—and actually allowed to join the

army in a sort of unrecognised shape as a volunteer. He distinguished himself under the Duke of Cumberland, married an heiress, got into the House unopposed (except by his father), became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Marquis of Townshend. He, too, was considered a man of wit, and became talked of for spirited and skilful caricatures. Of these he even published a collection under the name of Austin; and of his gifts in the first direction an example that has been preserved is not without merit. He had quarrelled with the Duke of Cumberland, and was seen at a review by one of the duke's creatures or spies, who said to him sneeringly, "I suppose, sir, you come here as a Spectator?" "And why not, sir," said the other on the instant, "as well as a Tatler?" A pleasant letter of his has been preserved, dated from Dundee, where he was in garrison, written "to my well-beloved friend and companion, George Selwyn, from my cell at Dundee,"—which humorous style of address he says he is sure will be acceptable to his friend, as it gives his letter "the air of a malefactor's confession." He describes the Scotch company with whom he

is brought in contact in unflattering but epigrammatic fashion. "Our mirth," he says, "is riot without any meaning; and our acquaintance, society without any friendship" —a description which, at that time, would apply to many quarters of the country besides "my cell at Dundee." He had not seen a woman "of any rank" that was "handsome enough to engage one's attention;" and he begs his friend to send him down "any new prints that are good;" for this lively soldier, as has been just mentioned, was skilful at his pencil, and covered "cards and napkins," and even walls, with his satirical sketches. Long after, when Lord Lieutenant, one of the sudden changes of ministry actually brought over Lord Harcourt to Dublin Castle as his successor, who surprised him at three o'clock in the morning at a carouse; but though thus awkwardly surprised, he was ready with a jest. "Your lordship," he said, "cannot say you found us napping."

CHAPTER II.

A DEBATE ON THE MARRIAGE LAWS.

CHARLES TOWNSHEND was born on the 29th of August, 1725. When he returned from Holland, he was sent to Oxford. He did not begin his political life until the year 1747, when he was brought into Parliament, and only twenty-two years old. He fell at once into the "gay" set who then ruled the clubs and coffee-houses of the town, and was the early friend of Selwyn, Gilly Williams, and others of the same class. "It is very convenient," he wrote to his friend Selwyn, the year after he entered Parliament, "to have our journey to the Tower deferred; and for my part I am so indolent as to find a pleasure in only putting off a

trouble." He was not one of that class who are born with a bundle of red tape for a heart, and a sheaf of "returns" for brain. "I cannot go to the opera because I have forsworn all expense which does not end in pleasing me, and besides, I have not yet been dutifully to welcome my father to this wicked town." This was but an affectation of indolence, as well as that was an affectation about declining the opera. No public man had ever less red tape bound about his heart. Very soon he became remarkable for "exceeding application" and diligence; and yet, while laying himself out ardently for political advancement, he contrived all through his life to combine with business an ardent indulgence in pleasures; but pleasure in his day was but a department of politics. He attached himself to Lord Halifax, and became a favourite of that nobleman, took up the line of "trade," and began to attract notice by drawing up papers and plans for that department.

It was proposed to enter him in Lincoln's Inn; but it was soon discovered there was not material in him for a lawyer. No one was ever to sneer so pleasantly at the refinings

of that profession. He seems to have fallen into the company of the dissipated young men of fashion, and used to frequent Tom's Coffee House, and give tea at his rooms. Sometimes he fell into the prevailing exercise of the day, and could write verses to a lady of quality—having the true *banal* and classical tone then in fashion. There has been preserved

AN INSCRIPTION

WRITTEN IN 1749, BY THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES TOWNSHEND, ON LADY C—— WISHING TO BE BURIED IN HIS SHRUBBERY, AT ADDERBURY.

Within this monument doth lie
What's left of Cœlia's gallantry.

STRANGER! whoe'er thou art, bestow
One sigh in tribute ere you go.
But if thy breast did ever prove
The rapture of successful love,

Around her tomb the myrtle plant,
And berry'd shrubs which ringdoves haunt:
The spreading cypress, and below
Bids clumps of arbor vitæ grow;

Th' uxorious plant that leans to find
Some female neighbour of its kind;
With beech to tell the plighted flame,
And ravine to conceal the shame.

That every tree and every flower
May join to form the am'rous bower,
Wherein at close of summer heat
The lovers of the green shall meet.

This is poor enough; but no doubt was enough to secure him the reputation of an "ingenious young gentleman." For to write verses was to be "ingenious."

That he was considered a young man of promise is evident from his being given the "show part" of seconding the address. The Pelhams were then in office, and some years of placid politics had been trailing slowly by. The Opposition seemed to have lost all heart, and had, in fact, dwindled away. Government had come to be a pleasant system of distributing places, pensions, and titles; and the fortunate holders of office seemed like men who had secured rich sinecures for life. But a more stirring period was drawing on. Some questions were coming up which would rouse a more wholesome spirit, and give an opening to men of ability and energy.

Indeed, as we look back across the flat Dutch country of politics, anything like sparkle or brilliancy becomes as welcome to the eye as patches of colour in a landscape. In the older dispensation of political battle the ground was rough, the fighting was irregular and more desperate, and the struggle was for life and

death. It was a fight between natives and settlers, which involved extermination on one side or the other. Men aimed from trees—there were ambuscades, and feats of daring personal courage. There were grander questions unsettled, and greater principles at stake, and the whole was therefore more entertaining to a mere spectator.

Now, the whole has become more methodized. It is rather the manœuvring of two great and equal armies. They all move in masses. The chronicle of their battles expends itself in the weak stream of parliamentary reporting. There are no guerilla bands; no party irregular horse; and, above all, there are no wild dashing captains and leaders, slightly lawless and unscrupulous, but exquisite swordsmen, and glittering all over, like Murat, with gold and flashing embroidery. Now the captains, more steady and with deeper solid ability, wear sad and sober grey, and have lost all dramatic character.

To this class conspicuously belonged Charles Townshend. We look back to the stirring days in which he lived, and his white plume is seen tossing in the heart of the struggle.

The eye rests on his figure with pleasure. The men of his own time were no less astonished at his feats and daring. Walpole seemed to have been actually fascinated by him, and at a loss to convey his admiration for that strange compound of wildness, impetuosity, daring, singular intellectual power, and dazzling brilliancy. More or less, he impressed everybody with the same feeling. It is very much the tone of mind with which we look on Sheridan; but Charles Townshend seemed to carry with him more *respect* than Sheridan enjoyed, and inspired more fear than Sheridan ever inspired. In all the joined and patched governments which succeeded each other in his day, the patchers and joiners were made uneasy by this Charles Townshend element. When all was complete, there were endless shifts and coquetries to secure him. But part of this reverence must be set to the account of the solid noble English family to which he belonged—the titled and territorial "back," which in England are the stays and metal bracings of political alliance.

Now, a curious question, not very remark-

able in itself, and about which the country might be said to be indifferent, was to agitate the House. That there existed a crying abuse in reference to illegal and scandalous marriages, there could be no question. That the trade of what were called "marriage shops" was thriving to a degree that must have caused serious social disorder, may be conceded. But the heat, the ardour, the fury with which the matter was debated, had quite a different source from the affected championship of youth, and tender virginity, and female honour, and the sacred custody of all the pastoral virtues, and the charm of virtuous home. It was an opening welcomed with delight, for the satisfactory venting of bitter animosity that was more than political; and the whole debate, from this confusion of interests, the insubordination of officials, and the pleasant ridicule of those looking on, becomes as lively a picture as we could find of parliamentary life in those times.

Some sort of regulation was certainly needed, if what was given out was true. It was said that one Keith, the "couple beggar," who enjoyed most practice, actually boasted of having

united, according to his own disorderly rite, some six or seven thousand couple in a single year, while in the parish church close by, only sixty or seventy was the average for the same time. The economy of the matter could scarcely be at the bottom of this preference, for there was but a few shillings difference in the tariff. The victims were said to be young girls with fortunes, young men with titles and money, and rich dowagers—if victims they could be called—languishing for young men of good face and figure.

In 1752, a bill, therefore, had been passed through the Upper House to restrain these excesses. But it seems to have been a clumsy instrument. It was framed in almost a ludicrous spirit of rigour, a severity that quite frustrated its own ends. Publishing of banns had fallen into disuse, being considered too vulgar a publicity for persons of quality, and only adopted by the lower classes. They were now made compulsory. Consent of parents and guardians was made absolutely necessary. Dreadful penalties were held up for those who dared to solemnize a marriage without the regular steps, and in such a case

the marriage itself was pronounced null and void.

The judges were accordingly enjoined to draw up an enactment of suitable severity, but, it was said, blundered so often in their task, that the Chancellor himself took the matter in hand, and produced a measure, which perhaps the fond partiality of paternity made him determine on forcing on the country. He was "a little lawyer" impatient of contradiction; but it was very characteristic that a bill of such aristocratical arrogance should have come from one who had raised himself from the very meanest of the lower classes. When it came to the Commons, Ryder, the Attorney-General, a humdrum law officer of very mediocre talents, introduced it. The Chancellor had ordered his parliamentary staff to "nurse" his pet measure carefully. Ryder ushered in the bill with a grave pomposity that suggested to some the ramblings of an old nurse. In his eagerness, he was betrayed into a ridiculous speech which he had to withdraw almost as soon as spoken. He said there used to be an opinion that marriage was indissoluble, but he thanked God they had all got the better of that, and

the reverend bench in the other House were entitled to the thanks of the latest posterity *for consenting to render Christianity consistent with common sense.* This extraordinary compliment both to religion and the bishops—equally undeserved by both—must have extorted a cry of angry derision from the House: for he gravely proceeded to correct his indiscretion. "'I hope," he said, "I shall not be mistaken—*Christianity has always been consistent with common sense*"—a solemn amendment almost as ludicrous as his blunder.

Next came a speaker of a very different order—a clever, jovial Irishman of large figure and stentorian lungs; whose life was pure pleasure, and whose company was always welcome to men and women. He had abandoned his faith, it was said, "for the Protestant religion, money, and widows," and it might be peerages, and was now making a pleasant rollicking speech, full of force and vivacity, on a subject suited exactly to his sensible good-humoured treatment. He openly charged the Upper House with wishing, by this bill, to secure all the heiresses in the kingdom for their body. He bewailed the condition of

"the young commoner," who had no friend "but his own superior merit and the little deity called Love." Even this last auxiliary was but of a fitful and uncertain sort—for did not his influence "with a young lady always decrease as she advanced in years"? or does not ambition come in, and "banish the little deity called Love," who, if he can at all keep a wretched little corner for his client, can only introduce him as a gallant, not as a husband? This came with pleasant appropriateness from the free Irish gentleman, who was to marry two titled widows, and by those alliances secure fine estates and an earldom. But the topic was gravely urged by other speakers, and the Lords were severely inveighed against from all sides for their greedy and selfish eagerness to secure the heiresses of the kingdom.

With a sort of rough banter, Nugent went on to picture "the joint accumulation of riches and nobility which would be the result." What sort of breed "the offspring would turn out, it would be easy to guess, if the gout, the gravel, and madness, are always to wed together." What a hopeful generation of wealth and quality might be looked

for! What a fine appearance at the head of our army, should *there be an invasion!* and, indeed, what would be more likely to overrun us with French manners and *French morals?* This sentiment must have drawn a cheer from the country benches, and came with excellent appropriateness from Robert Nugent, a notorious man of pleasure.

Perhaps it was this good sound hit at the Frenchmen that brought up Mr. George Haldane, whose short speech gives a delightful specimen of the "true blue" country gentleman's doctrines, half alarmist, half constitutional. In this fatal bill he saw clearly the overturn of the constitution, for by it would not the Lords secure both the wealth and interest of all the commoners of England? Would not that put into their hands the power of nominating all the members, and *then* where would be the constitution? Just as Sir Roger read so diligently Sir Richard Baker's excellent chronicle, and made it his political bible, so Mr. Haldane had been turning over the History of Venice, and seems to have been haunted by the condition to which the doges reduced that country "in

the fourteenth century." When this bill was passed, England would come down to the degraded and slavish condition to which Venice sank under the aristocracy and the doges "in the fourteenth century." He rang the changes on this scrap of Venetian history, and, no doubt, fatigued the House.

But it was now to be refreshed by a treat of no common order. To a man of ability, and gifted with the light and airy touch which is so effective, but unhappily so rare, what was now debated offered a subject most welcome and tempting. A young man, tall, of good figure, had caught the Speaker's eye, and was now addressing the House, with animated and almost vehement gestures, great vivacity, and with a singular absence, in one so young, of anything approaching to shyness—for he was but eight and twenty; his voice penetrated to every corner of that house, and he was dealing with the subject with ridicule and sarcasm, and a colloquial freedom and unconcern that the oldest member might have envied. Any one asking who was this "cool hand," might have been told that it was young Charles Townshend—a "son of

Ethelreda"—one of Lord Halifax's *protégés* —an eager, pushing—in Mr. Haldane's view perhaps "forward"—fellow; and who had already spoken in the House, affecting to make a speciality of trade matters and finance, but had made no impression.

It was a surprising speech. Even in the imperfect reports of the time, it is impossible not to be struck by its airy gaiety—scarcely wit—and pleasant effrontery; and by its easy passage from this lighter view to a serious, sensible, argumentative treatment. He even grappled with the strictly legal arguments; and he showed, what experience confirmed, that the bill would be quite powerless to effect what it proposed. Why not, he said—anticipating a measure the wisdom of which was only recognised a hundred and twelve years later—have a universal register for marriages? The alleged necessity of this elaborate bit of legislation was the frequency of bigamy; "or polygamy," added the young man, glancing at the law officers; "for our lawyers call it sometimes by one and sometimes by the other name." He then illustrates his view of a clandestine marriage very hap-

pily—as a true marriage, though unlicensed —"just as goods are said to be clandestinely entered, though often landed upon some part of our coast in a very public manner." So might it be, he said, of a marriage entered into "without a clearance from the proper officer."

Then, taking a bold, manly ground which must have brought the whole House with him, he argued boldly that there was nothing disgraceful in the unequal marriages which it was the secret aim of the bill to restrain. Suppose a young lord *did* marry a shoemaker's daughter, there was nothing scandalous or infamous in such an act. There was indeed something scandalous and infamous in acts they heard of every day: as, for instance, in an alliance between a common sharper and a lady of quality. "I mean," added Charles, "a sharper *of low rank*; for we may have sharpers among us whose addresses would be approved of by the parents of most ladies of rank in the kingdom." This was a happy stroke, and founded in perfect truth. Then, as to the dreadful penalties menaced against the clergy in case of any irregularity—how were they to protect themselves? "In short, sir," said young

Townshend, "*if I were an incumbent* I should decline to perform *any* ceremony, I should see such perils!" Then, some previous speaker having alluded to the Dutch manners and customs in respect of marriage, he recollected and turned to profit his old Dutch training at Leyden, and gave the House some pleasant local details, which residence only could have furnished him with, and showed how mistaken was the common English view. "This were a patient people," he said, "not given to changes: a promise there was almost as sacred as the marriage tie itself." And he told, perhaps to the amusement of the House, how a lady there gave her lover what was called a "trow-brief"—on which they lived together; if the trial proved unsatisfactory, she burnt the trow-brief, and the matter was at an end. As to English girls, no matter what their legislation, promises in plenty would be always given, aye, and be trusted, too, by the young girls; "and he must be a man very ignórant of the world who cannot imagine the former case, or a very unfortunate man who cannot imagine the latter. For it is *plain he never enjoyed the good graces of any*

young woman whatever!" Encouraging cheers now saluted this happily turned sentiment. He went on—warming as he proceeded. He must look on the bill "as one of the most cruel enterprises against the fair sex that ever entered into the heart of man. And if I were concerned in promoting it, I should expect to have my eyes torn out by the young women of the first town I passed through; for against such an enemy I could not surely hope for the protection of the gentlemen of our army."

Then he came to the part which on the next day was the talk of the town. He hinted at his own position—as the younger son of a capricious father, who had already prevented him from making an advantageous match; and asked, with mock indignation, were new shackles to be "forged to keep young fellows of ability from mounting to a level with their luckier elder brothers?" It must have been only the assumed *naïveté* and nature of this odd complaint that could have saved him from confusion; but this tone of assumed grievance, this vanity, a link he always wore upon his sleeve, was felt to be so charac-

teristic of the man, that it never was distasteful to the House. That speech, delivered with perfect ease and coolness—with a loud voice and a louder laugh—at once marked him out, and was already lifting him to that level with his elder brother, which, as he thought, only a marriage with a person of wealth could have the effect of doing.

Lord Hillsborough, who followed, replied to him, beginning with some absurd compliments on his "engaging manner" and the "music in his voice," which, however, did not reach the understanding. Mr. Townshend, he said, expressed himself "in such beautiful terms, and was so ingenious in finding out arguments and in putting them so strongly, that he was always sure to be heard with attention, and even with a sort of previous prejudice in favour of anything he might say. This was a little strong; and Henry Fox, who came next, though supporting Townshend's view, could not refrain from some sarcasm. As *he* could not pretend to have any music in his voice, he was afraid the noble lord would have neither entertainment nor information from what he was about to say. There was

great truth in this speech, for it was notorious that Fox had a low mumbling that could not reach half way down the House. It seemed to him that nothing could be more clearly directed to the understanding than what his friend Townshend had said—"but it was a known misfortune of our nature that, when that understanding is once prejudiced on any subject, it can no more receive information from reason than we can when our ears are stopped *receive pleasure from music.*" This is a good specimen of the blunt House of Commons retort fashionable in that day.

Murray, the solicitor, then followed—also with a compliment to Townshend—and, what was a greater compliment, replied to him. The debate went on for several days, and the measure was fought desperately through. The spirit and personality—yet a personality rarely indecent, and this only lent a vivacity to the debate—contrasts very favourably with the tameness of our modern discussions. The struggle, in truth, was then more directly on the floor of the House; and all England did not listen, canvass, condemn, approve, and restrain, as it does now. The chief or member

had then no assistance from without, and, like an ambassador in a foreign and distant land, had to fight his own battle on his own responsibility.

On the Chancellor's head most fury was spent. One member insinuated that his pride was concerned in the measure, though his reason saw its folly and impracticability; and illustrated this view by a happy anecdote of the Salisbury doctor, who had decreed that a woman's leg should be cut off; but being made sensible of his error at a consultation, declined to sacrifice his reputation by owning to a mistake; and so the leg was cut off. This brought up the Chancellor's son in warm defence of his father, and he actually threatened Fox that he would be made to feel the Chancellor's resentment. "It was new in Parliament, new in politics, new in ambition," he said, "to deal with men's characters in this way." Fox retorted happily: "Is it new in Parliament to be conscientious? I hope not! Is it new in politics? *I am afraid it is.* Is it new in ambition? It certainly is, to attack such authority." This was smart hitting. Still the bill made steady way. It was, however, sadly

cut up in its progress. Fox had the alterations written in red ink, which Murray noticed, and said, scornfully, "How bloody it looks!" Fox turned on him promptly, and with great readiness pointed to it as if it was Cæsar's body. "Yes, but you cannot say 'twas *I* did it. Look what a rent the *learned* Casca made!" (This was in allusion to the ponderous Ryder, the Attorney-General.) Through "this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed," and he looked at Pelham. Charles Townshend spoke again against details of the bill, and it is said with the same wit as on the former occasion. The Speaker gave the Attorney-General the lie flatly, and there was near being a battle between these two learned persons. At last the bill reached the other House much mauled and mangled, where it was received by the Chancellor in a perfect fury. He spoke as if he were replying in the other House. Young men, of course,* warm in constitution, impetuous, and eager after youth and beauty and plenty of money, for these he could find some excuse; but there were others for whom no such allowance could

* Walpole makes it more personal, and refers to "*the* young man," *i.e.*, Charles Townshend.

be made. One, indeed, was a good, well-meaning man enough, who had no command of his words, and whose language carried him away; a contemptuous indulgence that referred to Nugent and Nugent's country. But there was another, dark and gloomy, a more invidious plotter, who was trying to form a party and put himself at the head of it; but his schemes had been seen through and defeated. Then he brought in the favourite device of those times, which was to denounce opposition to the Government as opposition to the King. Such were radicals, subverters of the glorious constitution, eager partisans of the French. Was not he the king's chancellor? were not the king's wishes expressed through him? When they struck at him did they not strike at the majesty of the king? He then almost raved against "the profligacy"—another favourite word of the times—of those who had opposed the bill. But, said he, "that incendiary" had been properly rebuked. "I despise his invective and scurrility, and I despise also his retraction and excuses." (Mr. Fox had made some qualification of his invectives.) "These greedy schemes for power," he went on, "should

give a wholesome warning to the public, as to what may be expected from such open contemners of the law and constitution." This indecent wrangle becomes yet more indecent when it is considered that these were two officers of the Government and in the same ministry. But this was a spectacle often witnessed, especially in the case of measures that were *quasi* open measures; and this Marriage Bill, though started as an open question, had roused such political bad blood, that it had insensibly drifted into the shape of a cabinet question, after Fox, too, had been committed to opposing it.* From that time eyes began to settle on the young debater, only eight and twenty, so daring, so ready, and so unabashed; and it required no political prophet to see that, in any future dispensations, he could not readily be overlooked. Daring, readiness, and a certain effrontery, were at this time certain aids to success in the English

* The direct fruit of this ill-judged law was a victim out of the Savoy Chapel—Tate Wilkinson's father, a worthy man, whose motives were innocent. Strange to say, Garrick was the "informer," the clergyman having married some of the Drury Lane company. The unfortunate man was transported. A year or so later, it had to be "tinkered up;" but the Fleet and Gretna marriages went on triumphantly.

Assembly, constituted as it then was. Even now his "shiftiness," so curiously combined with steadiness and industry, had attracted notice, and quiet politicians looking on had remarked that he revelled in as many tricks and stratagems—for the most part unsuccessfully—as a veteran statesman of the time.

But almost every act in the life of this brilliant genius seemed to be as inconsistent and irregular as his nature. The Marriage Act might indeed "forge shackles" for other young men of abilities, but he was to triumph over all ordinary disabilities; and not two years after his protest, he himself was to refute his own argument by marrying a wealthy dowager of quality.

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE AND ITS MANAGEMENT.

The state of the House of Commons during the twenty years or so of Charles Townshend's career was certainly very curious, and has scarcely been realized, in detail, by the present generation. As his life was almost spent in that atmosphere, some understanding of its nature will be necessary, and a short account of the system of "management of the House," and of the instruments used in that management, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

The odd change in the relative attitude of Whigs and Tories has been often noticed. For the Tories of a later time now seem to hold the place which the Whigs of a hundred and twenty years ago held, who were the pretorians

of the constitution—pure and simple—and the firm opponents of all innovation: while the Tories then appeared to be associated with change and disorder. But, in truth, each attitude was but an attitude enforced by the situation. The king whom the Tories would conserve, and the principles which they would sustain, had been driven from the kingdom. The king and constitution, whom the Whigs would submit to the progressive action of reforming principles, were as yet too new and insecure to allow of such operations in the presence of disaffected opponents. For the moment, therefore, the Tories were forced into the attitude of radicals or "Jacobites;" and the Whigs into that of the most stubborn and mole-eyed conservatives of the Eldon school. But, gradually, as the old nightmares of Jacobitism faded out, the abstract ideas of "king and constitution" took the place in the Tory's heart of that substantial monarch who had been cast out; and the Whig, now freed from any menace to his favourite constitution, began to move in his old course, and discover faults and apply remedies; so that what he had established might become more perfect, and

approach yet nearer to his darling ideal. This was but the first step down the "liberal" ladder; and as the Whig went down, step by step, the Tory came up, until places were gradually exchanged. And although these positions might seem to be now finally established, it is not so wholly improbable that both might once more return to their old positions. For we might readily picture to ourselves a revival of a sort of Holy Alliance between absolutist powers, to check the prevailing "liberal" tone over Europe, and conceive the mass of the conservative body following their chief in lending countenance and support to such an alliance, and to suppose, besides, the German tinge of our own Court to deepen a little; under such conditions—not by any means far-fetched—the conservative party would find itself looked upon very much as the Tories were for many years after the battle of Culloden.

During this era it was noted that the old declamatory artificial style, popular in Sir Robert's day—the laboured and prepared oration which was set off with classical parables and "stories"—had quite gone out. This is fully intelligible when we consider the guerilla

character parliamentary fighting had assumed. Where so much turned on a sudden and personal stroke, by which an adversary might be routed, a good, ready, bitter style must have been invaluable. But a far greater blessing must have been the absence of debates on mere abstract questions, which is enfeebling the influence of our modern Parliaments. No tenth-rate member, sitting for some obscure borough, possessed of a dreary fluency in uttering dreary platitudes, could then "bring on" his motion on the "state" of a remote country, and set the House discussing Vatel and Grotius like the boys at an Oxford debating school. These talking essayists are generated by abundant reporting, the indulgence of a free press, and the speculative mind of the country, whom such disquisitions set thinking yet more industriously. But in the last century *The London Chronicle* and *The St. James's Post* dared not report what was said; nor, if permitted, could they afford more than a couple of columns of their tiny quarto page to parliamentary matters. Such speakers, therefore, having no support from without, were at the mercy of the House, and were promptly

elbowed aside to give place to better men, and to subjects of real practical interest.

The relation of parties, too, had, at this time, sunk into a state almost of stagnation. Indeed, as a party, what were known then as the Tories, had been making but a faint struggle. The abortive insurrection of '45 had been used with effect—though unjustly enough—to damage them, and the violent proceedings of the House against Murray and others had shown that the majority were inclined to make an insolent use of their position. But in truth it was not so much a question of parties as of individuals. As we look back, the eye rests not so much on the broad masses of infantry, as on the isolated captains—men who had to hold their command, either like Newcastle, by territorial influence, money, and interest; or like Fox, from sheer good fighting qualities; or like the common intriguers, who had no regular followers, but who in a day might be captains without a company. There were but few independent members, as the phrase is known to us, for the following of the independent member is *outside* the House; to be found in the great public,

in the meeting, and in the newspaper, almost as good auxiliaries as a party. In those times the independent member had no such support, simply because both newspaper and public could know little of what he was doing, and in the crowd of leaders and selfish partisans who were disposing of the *matériel* in the House, using it for their own selfish ends, there was no place for him. Pitt's voice indeed thundered through the walls of the House, and reached the great community of England, and he thus triumphed over the disabilities of imperfect reporting. In the absence of any pure and wholesome restraint, it is almost bewildering to see the confusion of ranks to which this lax distinction led, and it became at times almost impossible to class some discontented chief as belonging to any party. It was no uncommon spectacle to see a member of the Government openly opposing his brethren, and almost indecently heading an opposition to one of his brother minister's bills. And there were so many clever men —as bold and daring as they were clever— each selfish, intriguing, and jostling with one another, that the temptation to intrigue became

almost irresistible. The materials were there ready to hand; there was no check from without; and any man with guerilla qualifications for debate, with readiness, rude sarcasm, and a rough insolence, could give trouble to ministers, and was in himself, in the absence of a broad, strong controlling party, to be *dealt with* as a party. When it is considered what agencies of conviction were in a minister's hands—to be used, too, without scandal—it may be conceived what confusion such a system would engender. A worse result was, that a ministry became no more than a sheaf of discontented elements, many of which may have been brought in with infinite difficulty, after fierce battles lasting for years, and imperfect reconcilement; any one of which, too, on the first opportunity, might take disgust and be found sulking on the Opposition benches, and speaking against its chief, though taking the chief's pay. Nor was such extraordinary insubordination thought out of course or improper where the delinquent had strength enough to make himself feared, and he might retain his office and his enmity so long as he had strength to keep them. The chief of a cabinet, too,

who had such colleagues, after innumerable battles and intrigues forced upon him, began at once to intrigue himself against them, to counterplot in the closet, and secretly impede every plan that came out of their office, until at last in disgust they were forced to resign.

There was another element, too, present to the politics of that generation, and not known to our own, which formed a fruitful and happy foundation for fresh intrigue—namely, the rather foreign one of the royal favour and support. To a ministry, or to a minister, this was as necessary as parliamentary support, and a jealous rival putting on an affectation of being eager to welcome a dangerous competitor on to the Treasury bench, could lament and secretly stimulate that mysterious royal hostility which could not endure his presence at the Council board. Looking back into those older parliamentary contests, we are astonished to see the dangerous extent to which this *tactique* was carried, and to what an unconstitutional extent the sovereign ventured to allow his own humours and dislikes to interfere with the lawful course of English government.

It is astonishing, too, to consider the lawless school of politics that was in fashion—the unscrupulous schemers who took part in it, and even the dirty cloud of intrigue, through which even figures of a better sort and pretension can be made out. There were no characters then of the "pure patriot" class, for it is notorious that Pitt, before the days of his popularity, pined and plotted for office with a craft and eagerness not known to the vulgar estimate of the grand Roman simplicity of the greater Earl of Chatham. Such might, perhaps, be found in the obscure ranks of the silent country gentlemen—the heavy Tory and Jacobitical George Cookes and Robert Haldanes, who came from their estates in the country. A more conspicuous class were the free lance politicians, who, if more pure, were thoroughly selfish, and, though conscious of great and shining abilities, thought only to turn these to profit, display them, and at any price and with an open unscrupulousness, fight their way to office. To this showy class belonged Fox—a leader to whose brilliant abilities justice has scarcely been done—Wilkes, and Charles Townshend. But there was yet another class,

larger in number and more effective perhaps —the corrupt intriguers, who had no politics but craft, no gospel but office, and whose sole aim was either to bluster or crawl into place and pension. And no parliamentary era ever produced such a remarkable trio in this line as the Duke of Newcastle, Bubb Doddington, and Rigby.

The Duke of Newcastle, the arch-schemer of parliamentary history, has become popularly known from Macaulay's delightful sketch. It is a character, indeed, that would well bear elaborate handling, and that gorgeous essayist might well regret that Scott had not left us an interview between the duke and Jennie Deans. But with all his secret burrowings and intrigues, his constitutional love of mean intrigue, his drivellings and maunderings after office, scarcely sufficient credit has been given to him for actual ability. Of this there must have been a large foundation to give him such power and keep him in office so long, though he chose to divert it into tortuous channels, and, to the end of his days, preferred merely creeping up the back stair instead of publicly ascending the grand flight, as he

might have done just as easily. Walpole, in those "Mémoires" which make the most delightful political reading, absurdly attributes his whole power to what he calls his "vast income"—thirty thousand a year!—a curious measure of the money value of that day. There was another situation, too, out of which he had made profit and which did infinite credit to his skill. Sir Robert was hurrying to his fall, and the duke had instinct enough to see this decay and cultivate relations with some powerful men in the Opposition. Walpole was chief; Lord Townshend was whispering to him to get rid of Newcastle, Lord Townshend's own brother-in-law, and to this end he was constantly stirring till he effected a sort of league with Lord Grenville for Sir Robert's overthrow; at least, this was the scandal. No sooner was Lord Grenville established, than the duke was busy scheming with Lord Harrington for his overthrow. When Lord Harrington had been established as secretary, the duke was again plotting with Lord Sandwich, then minister at the Hague, to keep him in the dark, even as to the details of the Foreign Office; and the duke succeeded in this

crafty game, causing a disgust in Harrington, who at once resigned his office. This was a crooked and dishonest policy enough; but the truth was, all about him, beginning with his own brother-in-law, the father of Charles Townshend, were busy with the same tactics. Everywhere was suspicion, dishonesty, and disloyalty, and he was lucky who in self-preservation could anticipate the treachery of a rival.

But to carry out such a system, *and, above all, in the character of a leader*, surely required parts and ability, if honour and honesty were wanting. No such weak, maudlin, twaddling dotard (as he has been drawn), could, by the mere clinging to office, save himself for so many years. Walpole has a very pompous and studied character of him;* too studied and affectedly antithetical to be of much value. But even he admits that the duke always caressed his enemies to enlist them against his friends, and that there was no service he would not do for either, till both were above being served by him—a heartless and shameless policy, but not to be tried too nicely in those heartless and

* "Mémoires," vol. i. p. 144.

shameless days. Even those oddities which excited the ridicule of his day, and which represented him as first proposing to send troops to a town with an unfamiliar name, and then asking where it was, were oddities of manner and temper more than stupidity. They did not go for much. In truth, did they go below the surface, and mean more than outside eccentricity, the bold, unscrupulous men who were jostling each other for place and power would have thrust him out of the way in a moment. But it will be seen later how skilfully he could turn a political complication to account.

What shall be said of Doddington, the persevering intriguer, who so revelled in his back-stair journeys, his crawlings through the slums and sewers of sycophancy and adulation, that he carefully chronicled every minute step and stage of his noisome progress? But he was superior in ability to the mere mediocre crowd, whose only gifts were profuse servility. His were mere miniature intrigues within a small circle, marked at epochs by those almost joyful entries in his parasitical ledger: "Dec. 1.—Kissed hands;" and that yet more joyful day

which crowned his weary labours, and made the apothecary's son Lord Melcombe. So tortuous and minute were his channels of intrigue, and the wretched shufflings and counterplottings to secure or win back a faint breath of the prince's favour, that at times it is almost difficult to follow them. But the most delightfully characteristic trait of this Coryphæus of laborious schemers, was accidentally discovered by Mr. Wyndham, who found among his MS. papers an old copy of a printed poem, one of those "heroic epistles" in verse, to political patrons, which were one of the nuisances of the time. The printed copy was addressed to Lord Bute, the splendid Scotch fountain of honour, whom the Hanoverian Ahasuerus delighted to honour very extravagantly, and who was glorified as Pollio. But the MS. copy so awkwardly discovered, was dated many years before, and *had Sir Robert Walpole for its hero.* Pope found a place in a half line for "the flowers of Bubbington," and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who could be very lively when not called to account by a tall Irishman, was merry with him in a ballad called "A grubb upon bubb;" and when he at

last sank upon the soft cushion of the peerage, it was quite characteristic that the bedroom of his palace should be laid down with a patchwork carpet of all the flaps and cuffs of those innumerable embroidered suits in which he had gone so wearily and patiently to Court and tried to earn his wages.

But a far more remarkable portrait is that of Rigby. His figure, large and corpulent, in a dark purple suit without lace or embroidery, his jovial face, with a broad and audacious forehead, were very long familiar to the House. It was noted that he wore his coat rudely buttoned, and kept his sword thrust through the pocket. His speech was plain, forcible, direct, and to the point, saying everything in the plainest style. In what he said, he did not affect to fear, or even respect, the House or its opinion, and through all his speeches was noticed a blunt assumption that there were no such things there as patriotism, public virtue, or honour. This half cynicism, half joviality, was not a bad *rôle*, for it had an air of savage honesty or candour. He had attached himself to the Duke of Bedford, and had been very useful to that nobleman.

He could hunt, talk, or drink with any man; he loved good company, and was the friend of Foote and Garrick. When he was made Irish Secretary, he was able to feast the mimic Court at Dublin Castle, and to out-drink the Irish gentlemen*; and in the Irish Parliament he could practise those coarse acts of corruption which he afterwards turned to profit in another sphere. The details, indeed, of the Duke of Bedford's Irish sovereignty are almost shocking —the air reeks with political decomposition; and it would seem that Dublin Castle had become a sort of sale-room, where members bid for pensions, commoners for Irish peerages, and Irish barons for earldoms and English peerages.* Here Rigby, as auctioneer,

* It is hardly enough considered that the later condition of Ireland is but a legacy from these infamous days. When there was a job—a peerage or pension—that would not stand even the obsequious scrutiny of the English Parliament, the king sent over and had it privately "done" in Ireland. A common element in the bargains made by English placemen was, "a pension on the Irish Establishment." The writer has a MS. return of these monstrous burdens, about a hundred years old, in which grand duchesses, English dukes, foreign counts, ladies of the bedchamber, grooms and lacqueys, all figure. In the Bedford correspondence will be found the details of an intrigue by which a foreign princess received an Irish pension of 5000*l.* a year, which being successfully managed, it was thought that another

was in his element. He had a fine place down at Mistley, in Essex, where he hunted and drank, and saw a great deal of company. "Do you imagine, my David," he wrote to Garrick, "that any paltry consideration of office or business shall deprive me of the pleasure of our Mistley party? I should be worth but half the Pay Office indeed, if I could sacrifice the rites of Mistley to any earthly consideration. No; they begin the 25th, at dinner—and you and your *cara sposa* are expected by her, and your faithful servant, RICHARD RIGBY."

This gives us a good hint of the jovial hunting politician, and that indifference which he professed to continuing politics, and even office.

The Pay Office, one of the most coveted places in the kingdom, was exactly suited to such a man. The loose and discreditable system of government allowed, as is well known, the occupant to keep huge floating balances, often exceeding a hundred thousand pounds, in his

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of 2000*l.* a year could be passed for Prince Ferdinand. But the Duke and Mr. Rigby were afraid, and thought it scarcely prudent "*just then.*"

hands; and this Rigby lent out on mortgage and other securities, and even purchased estates with. It was part of the corrupt tone which was encouraged in all matters relating to the nation. The public outside perfectly understood his character, and through a long series of years could only protest on paper. In all the satirical verses of the day, written in a savage, bitter tone, the writing of a gagged and helpless public opinion, he is seen under the same type—the corrupt, unblushing, noisy, convivial, dishonest placeman. By some he was called "the boatswain" of his party:—

"Shake off thy maiden fears—arise,
Smooth-spoken Rigby, claim thy prize,
Burnish thy shining front anew—
Shall Fox, shall Harley, Luttrell, dare
With thine their foreheads to compare,
Great boatswain of the Bloomsbury crew?"

Another plainly alluded to Rigby, who—

"By his back and fist
Advanced in black corruption's list."

Another contemptuously spoke of—

"Rigby and Weymouth with French claret
Join in the chorus, 'Let us war it,
Though Britain be undone!'"

Another uncomplimentarily alluded to him as—

"Ragged Dick,
Ugly and saucy as Old Nick,
Avow your Bedford creed.
So void of sense, so damn'd audacious,
Hotter than that of Athanasius."

And in one of the capital political jests, which leave the pasquinade of our modern Charivaris so far behind, an imaginary list is given of the company at Mrs. Cornely's famous masquerades, with their dresses, where "His M——y" appeared "in a child's frock and bib, followed by Lord N——th, in the habit of an old woman, holding him in leading strings:" and where Lady Harr—t St—n-h—pe went as Susannah, "with Lord M—rell following her in the character of one of the Elders." To this festival Mr. Rig—y was sent "in the character of a drunken bacchanal."

For thirteen years and a half he continued to hold in his hands these enormous fluctuating balances of the Exchequer. But the reckoning came at last. This sort of "jolly" want of morality was thought to have been carried too far, and the House, in

one of the spasms of political conscience which seizes on it at periods only, and can only be soothed by a conspicuous victim, suddenly called him to account for his stewardship. The reaction against the unlucky coalition ministry —whom it was really the fashion to look on as a band of footpads, who had got possession of the Treasury*—and the affected purism of Pitt, greatly contributed to this step. The jovial, insolent, old politician, who had fattened on corruption, and who had no doubt thanked Providence again and again that he had a country to sell, was now to be called to account.

It is fashionable to talk of the corruption of the Irish Parliament and the venal Irish Court; but the truth is, it was Rigby, and men like Rigby, who brought over with them to Dublin the system and tactics they had left behind in London. The Castle was as much an auction-room for places, pensions, and titles, as the Pay Office, with this difference, that the Irish

* The nobleman who, after a notorious robbery in London, affected to see his lost stars and ribbons on Fox and the other members of the new Government, said this as something more than a jest.

Treasury had, besides its own corrupt burden, to bear its share of the cost of English corruption. Nor was this the worst: a line of ignorant, inexperienced men were sent to try their hands on the most delicate problems of statesmanship ever presented for solution to the world:—the reconcilement of the hostile claims of property as against population, and of the religion of the few and wealthy with that of the many and poor. That unfortunate country has been but too often made a sort of political hospital, where raw students are sent to "walk," and there learn surgery by experiments on the unfortunate patients in its wards.*

The same candid familiarity made him tell the House with coarse bluntness that, though tired of the war, he was by no means tired of receiving cash. And there was perfect truth

* When Lord Lieutenant, Lord Hertford wished to "provide" for Lord Beauchamp. This was contrived by turning an old incumbent out of a sinecure in Dublin Castle, worth 500*l.* a year. The old incumbent received a pension on Ireland equal to that amount, and the salary of the sinecure was doubled. In this way 1000*l.* a year was secured for the young nobleman. In the lists will be seen the names of ladies of quality—countesses even —"recommended" for pensions, and who did not disdain the unworthy alms of 200*l.* a year.

in what he so openly proclaimed. Never was there so lucky or so audacious a pluralist. He had been a Commissioner of Trade and Chief Secretary of Ireland, was Master of the Rolls for life, Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and Paymaster-General. But during the coalition ministry the scandal became too gross. The subject was brought before the House. It was found that there was a balance in his hands of one million one hundred thousand pounds, which was out at mortgage and in other investments. A great deal was of course called in and accounted for, and his friends at the Treasury were actually said to have paid over two hundred thousand pounds of the public money to cover the deficiency and stop the clamour. But it was only for the present. In two years, when Fox and his friends had been driven out, he was at the mercy of jealous inquirers. The whole matter was reopened; and for the rest of his life he was harassed by commissioners' scrutiny and a miserable struggle to save exposure. Not for ten years, and not until four years after his death, were the accounts finally audited, when he was charged with owing his office over one hundred thousand pounds. The

Government then made a compromise with his executors, and agreed to take about half that amount in settlement of all claims. And yet, with all this ill-gotten spoil—his sinecure places, his estate at Mistley, his being without the expenses of a family—the jovial Rigby died owing private debts to the amount of nearly one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Newcastle might certainly have been a fine subject for a Waverley character, but we think that Rigby, with his audacious forehead and florid cheeks, his political *bonhomie*, his honest candour in things of dishonesty, his hunting, his drinking, his gaming; even that night-scene during his Irish Secretaryship, when he and the Speaker had to address the mob, to save himself from being summarily swung up to the nearest lamp-post,* and his successful spoliation of the Pay Office—these incidents would have worked into a far more life-like portrait under the Leslie-like handling of Sir Walter.

Besides these there was the smaller fry, the Roberts, Bradshaws, Jerry Dysons, and Mackays, who earned their crust by a sort of

* It was a very narrow escape indeed. See Gilbert's "History of Dublin."

parliamentary "nightman's" work, and did degrading but really useful service in the delicate task of what was called "managing" the House.

It must be recollected what an influence such things as "the king's name," "the king's friends," had in the discussion of a question. It was a favourite tactic to represent any opposition to a measure of the king's ministry as an opposition to the king himself,* while if the king's enmity became thus a useful engine, the king's favour must have been no less an inducement, and those agents who, by carefully following up the dirty channels of corruption, could bring in recruits or discover openings for corruptions, were sure of a reward. The parliamentary atmosphere was indeed loaded and heavy. That unconstitutional whisper of the "king's friends" was made to do the work of a lawful majority. But ministers had yet more potent spells. The open corruption by money of which Sir Robert Walpole boasted had become systematized

* A very characteristic illustration of this will be found in a private letter of Rigby's to Garrick, where he says, "I rejoice in our Royal Master's triumph over such a set of scoundrels," and talks of Wilkes as "Jack Cade."

under later administrations. It is surprising how "rotten" was everything. The mere suborning by titles, ribbons, pensions, "slices of the new loan," lottery scrip, dockyard and other contracts, was the ordinary and more harmless routine, which even the purest minister might carry out. The most careless glance at the debates will show that these things were the mere common essentials for the proper management of the House. But there were yet coarser agencies in force. There were little straws — light, though significant—which showed how the winds of corruption set. Some one looking into the estimates discovered that the Secretary of the Treasury required nearly four hundred pounds a year for "whipcord," for tying up his papers. The first minister's stationery cost him a thousand a year. One lord of trade, on coming into office, gave an order for an enormous quantity of pewter inkstands for his own use, but then later consolidated his order into a magnificent silver one, which did him as well. Scandal even said that a handsome green velvet suit, in which he appeared at levées, had been made out of material

ostensibly ordered for the office bags. And for ten years after he retired and his office had been abolished, friends slyly noted that the letters he wrote to them were still on the old office paper. These are indeed trifles, but they are significant trifles.

But even an ingenious refinement upon corruption was discovered. Where places were few and rich in value, there was a limitation to the ministers' bounty. The system of "quartering" was then applied; namely, that the recipient should take the office subject to a contribution that might be laid on him for the benefit of a new object of liberality. Thus in 1765 was Wilkes "quartered" on the Treasury and Admiralty; the First Lord paying him five hundred pounds, the junior lords sixty, and the members of the board forty each. A handsome allowance, without work or duty, was thus made up of over a thousand a year. When Lord Weymouth had to be provided for, it was more than suspected that he was placed upon Rigby's unwilling back. And the father of a lady of quality, having vast patronage, took care to lay a charge for her benefit on every office that he gave away;

and this lucky lady was said to have "ridden," as the phrase was, sixteen offices at one time, and was still more lucky in outliving all the holders.

Indeed, there was a looseness in all matters relating to the public moneys that seemed purposely encouraged in order to give opportunity for corrupt rewards and corrupt patronage. There was a class of men over the kingdom, receivers of the land and other taxes, who were allowed to keep balances in their hands, or who finally paid them into the hands of London bankers, who were allowed a similar indulgence.* Later on it will be shown in more detail how under the correct and decent Pelham, under his politically profligate brother—how under Bute, Grenville, Rockingham, and Grafton there was a sort of hereditary succession of coarse and almost open bribery. Of this there can be no question. The town knew it, writhed under it, protested

* A good illustration of this abuse will be found in the life of Garrick. The house of Green and Amber, one of these privileged banks, was dabbling in speculation, and actually about purchasing Drury Lane. Suddenly a crisis came, and they were called on to pay in their balances. They failed; and 20,000*l.*, a large sum in those times, was lost to the country.

openly, denounced the delinquents in libellous terms.*

In the Poet's Corner the visitors to Westminster Abbey will notice an inscription to one Roberts, who lies inappropriately in such company, and which describes him as "the most faithful secretary of the Right Honourable Henry Pelham." From this flourish it is apparent that the grave in that splendid mausoleum, and the inscription on the grave, is but one more tribute to the glories of the minister "who had fled to heaven." Indeed the "faithful" services of Roberts would not exactly bear

* Even the jests of the day show the tone of the public mind. Some burglaries had been committed, and a strong guard had been placed at the Treasury. The wits wrote the following:—

"From sunset to daybreak, while folks are asleep,
New watch are appointed the Exchequer to keep,
New bolts and new bars fasten every door,
And the chests are made three times as strong as before;
Yet the thieves in the daytime the treasures may seize,
For the same are entrusted with care of the keys.
From night until morning 'tis true all is right,
But who will secure it from morning till night?"

Another pasquinade hit equally hard:

"Quoth Wild unto Walpole make me undertaker,
I'll soon find the rogues that robbed the Exchequer.
I shan't look among them that are used to purloining,
But shall, the first, search *in the chapel adjoining.*"

These were by Philip, Duke of Wharton.

being inscribed upon his tablet. He himself, grown old and feeble, once confessed what they were. There were a number of members who gave a steady support to the Government and the King, and who were regularly subsidized according to a graduated scale. Roberts was accustomed, on the day of prorogation, to take his stand in the Court of Requests, and as each opponent of "faction" passed him, contrived, in a friendly squeeze of the hand, to convey to him his stipulated salary. This usually varied from five to eight hundred a year. The name was entered in a secret volume. When the virtuous Pelham was snatched from earth, the Duke of Newcastle and the other intriguers who succeeded, were eager to secure this record, which would have been a useful *carte de pays*, but Roberts, faithful to such honour as there was in his unclean errands, declined to give it up. He was sent for, however, by his Majesty, to whom he resigned it, and who burnt it before his eyes.*

* This strange story is given on the authority of Wraxall. It has, of course, been vehemently disputed, especially as Wraxall had it only at second hand. But it falls in exactly with the tone of the day. This corruption was notorious; signs of it "crop up" everywhere—in the debates, lampoons, political memoirs,

Other facts were no less startling; coals and candles and office furniture were allowed to the First Lord, and to other high officers, but there were noble persons who actually had these supplies sent not only to their town houses, but to their country seats; charging furniture, and even carriage, to the unfortunate public. The Navy and Docks swarmed with abuses—abuses that continued down to Lord Dundonald's day; and the chief clerk at the Navy Office, with a salary of two hundred and fifty pounds a year, and forbidden to receive fees, was known to enjoy an income of nearly three thousand a year, made up of douceurs and gratifications. In the Stamp Office was a lucrative employment known as "Stamper," though purely mechanical; and the Treasury Lords were

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and letters of statesmen. It is a curious fact, that many of Wraxall's stories are being confirmed in the newer and later memoirs; and such inaccuracies as the "Slashing" Reviews of his own day could convict him of, were chiefly errors of locality or name. It should be recollected that he was very intimate with the smaller statesmen of his time; such as Lord George Germain and Lord Nugent, a class of men likely to pick up the details of secret politics, and in their old age very likely to be fond of talking them over. The "Memoirs" are most entertaining reading, and should be put on the shelf next to Boswell.

privileged to appoint their own butlers and footmen. These received perpetual leave of absence, and the duties were discharged by deputy. Mere pens and paper were set down in the estimates at eighteen thousand a year —an enormous sum for such times; and Pitt himself openly declared that he knew of private rooms, the very paper on the walls of which, was paid for by the public.

Under later administration the same system prospered. Secretary Bradshaw and his two deputies, Brummell and Robinson, "managed" the House during the American war. "Secretary Bradshaw" was a familiar name. As a sort of parliamentary ostler to the Treasury stables, he did useful service—was rewarded finally with a pension, settled, it was said, on his two sons also in succession. The public sang in disgust:

> "Sure 'twill be reckoned a manœuvre,
> That Bradshaw, once so mean and *pauvre*,
> Should for his life and his two sons'—
> For so they say the patent runs—
> Be vested with a pension clear
> Of fifteen hundred pounds a year."

How the preliminaries of the famous peace of 1762 were recommended to the House, may be

conceived. Lord Bute, centre of the shameless Scottish oligarchy—another plague for the unhappy country—found that he had only inherited the favourite arts of his predecessors for "managing" the House. One of his political lacqueys, John Ross Mackay, was appointed to the duties for which Roberts had obtained his resting-place in the Poet's Corner. Long after, at Lord Bessborough's dinner-table, in Cavendish Square, and under the influence of champagne, he incautiously talked over these matters. With servile complacency he boasted of the share he had in the peace. The difficulties, he said, were so enormous, that there was but one way of surmounting them. It would be more true to say, that this one fatal way of surmounting difficulties had itself created them. He himself had actually secured one hundred and twenty votes, at a cost of eighty thousand pounds. Forty members were valued at a thousand each, eighty others at the cheaper tariff of five hundred. The host was sensible of the imprudence of the old man's disclosure, and begged the two other gentlemen present not to mention what they had heard.

This again I take from Wraxall. He is con-

firmed by the Bishop of Llandaff, who had nearly the same story from Lord Shelburne, who, however, makes the amount "above sixty thousand pounds"—a not very important difference. The public, too, had an idea that something was wrong, and all the pamphlets and newspapers, including the *North Briton*, said the same thing in very plain terms.

This digression will be pardoned, when it is considered that it materially helps the understanding of that confused tangle of intrigue, and those mysterious changes, of which the "House" was the prey. And it helps, too, to justify the earnest tone which fine true natures like Pitt's adopted in their speeches; their despairing laments over their fallen country, and over the destruction to which she was hurrying, and which spectators of the present day are likely to set down to affectation, or to a histrionic reproduction of a "Roman senator" style.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INTRIGUE.

We may now return to Charles Townshend. The December of this year was to see the foundation of that famous institution, the British Museum, and when Sir Hans Sloane's curious collection was offered for sale to the country, it was determined to buy it, and the money was to be found through the odd agency of a lottery. But the House, in one of its fits of jealous morality, determined to guard this measure by extraordinary precautions. It sent forth rather menacing directions, that no dealer was to sell more than twenty tickets to a single person, and that the books were to be kept open for many months, to give a fair chance to the foreign market. This despotism

was in defiance of all rules, not of political economy, of which the House could know nothing, but of common sense. As well might they think of fixing the price of bread. With the best intentions and such feeble mechanism they thought they could frustrate the designs of monopolists and "jobbers." But the lists had not been opened six hours when every ticket had been swept off, and that, too, at an enormous premium. The four or five months' grace that was to have been allowed to foreign purchasers must have seemed absurd indeed, and almost ludicrous. The House was in a fury at this contempt of its authority, and determined to have a victim. One Leheup, a lottery office keeper, was selected, and no less than eighteen resolutions affecting him were brought on and debated.

Cooke, "a pompous Jacobite," dealt with it solemnly, as a pompous Jacobite would do, and saw deep evils in the whole. Fox boldly opposed it, and then Charles Townshend rose. His was a grave and sober treatment of the matter, very unlike his usual sparkling handling, and there was besides an air of ambiguity and trimming. He was for distinguish-

ing between inquiry and punishment. They should enter carefully on the former. He then aired a little of his "Trade and Plantations" law, which years before he had "made up" to help Lord Halifax. He explained to the House what "forestalling" was, what "regrating," and even quoted some old black letter statute of Edward I. on the same points. This, indeed, we may suspect was the object that brought him on his feet.

Then Nugent rose, who generally spoke on any question that Charles opened upon, and made a warm, honest, humane speech against this act of persecution. He said, and said truly, that it was beneath the dignity of the House, and urged, quite as justly, that all such pains and penalties would be inoperative. Simple farmers we know, he said, hang up the skins of crows, rooks, and other birds in their corn-fields, to frighten such birds from destroying their corn; but had it ever any effect?

He followed up this with an illustration quite characteristic of his own tastes and of his country. So fox-hunters, he said, who are no less simple but much more

hurtful than farmers, after having done a great deal of mischief by breaking down the fences of their neighbours in pursuit of that less mischievous animal, hang up his skin at the door of their hen-roost; but he never heard that other foxes were thereby frightened. On the contrary, they often come and take the poultry from the very door where the skin is hung up. So with robberies, which have been committed almost under the gallows where a highwayman is hung in chains. This brought Charles Townshend to his feet again. He retorted Nugent's highwayman illustration a little scornfully, and with good effect. If the punishment was to have no effect on the community it had some at least on the delinquent. He supposed it would be allowed that no future robbery could be committed by the man who was hung in chains. This was smart.

Suddenly news came that the minister, a man of good health, and young for a premier, being only sixty, had died after a short illness. This event had a surprising effect. It is almost amusing to see the way it was received by the nation. It was discovered

that a father, a friend, the best and purest of benefactors, had been snatched away. Britannia was bidden—in verse—to mourn because she had lost her saviour.* By a sort of common consent it seemed to be agreed that he should be regarded as the decent virtuous minister, whose calm virtues were reflected favourably on the dark background of a general corruption. It seemed to be understood that under his rule "faction," that is, constitutional opposition, was crushed. When he died, the plain good sense of Garrick was betrayed by the affected mourning of the day into a bit of fustian, or at least extravagance, which became very popular. Every one, he said or sang, in Pelham had lost "the husband, father, friend!" Had the nation, he asked, for some dreadful sin, incurred the divine wrath and "vengeful bolt," which "fell when Pelham dy'd?" Now, all was over; the evil angel would now stalk at large; but still from heaven he might look down

* Walpole had some designs and portraits made for the chapters of his "Mémoires," one of which represents Mr. Pelham in a flowing wig, with an emblematic "Faction and her Hydra" below him, asleep on a bed of poppies.

and save the sinking country. Above all, he might protect our parent king from

> "The pests of human kind,
> Whom royal bounty cannot bind,"

"vipers," who should be "crushed." In short, this was "faction" once more—that is, the opposition, who, as the poet so naively stated, were not to be bound by royal bounty. This is surprising as coming from Garrick, who was intimate with so many of these "pests of human kind." Even during Pelham's lifetime the flattery was all to the same key. Verses were written to him as if the newswriters and collectors of scandal were complaining that under his beneficent rule their occupation was nearly gone. *They* complained that—

> "Since your honor has sate at the head of affairs,
> No party will join 'em or faction invite
> To heed what they say or to read what they write.
> Sedition, and tumult, and discord are fled,
> And Slander scarce ventures to lift up her head.
> In short, public business is so carried on
> *That this country is sav'd and the patriots undone.*"

The concluding stroke is a delightful bit of almost sickly flattery, that must have loaded the stomach of the Right Honourable Henry Pelham like rich heavy plumcake. They im-

plored him, at this "dangerous crisis, *To take to your bosom a few private vices.*" Well might it be said of him that he taught and experienced universal servility in Englishmen, and Mr. Selwyn, attending the lamented premier's auction, made one of his happiest strokes when the dinner service was put up; "Lord! how many toads have eaten off these plates!"

But though "a nation's tears" were to "fall fast" over the urn of the departed statesman, and Britannia "to mourn" in a hundred strophes, and Mr. Garrick to falter in a broken voice that "Pelham had fled to heaven!" still it was notorious that his government was carried on by the same old arts as those professedly corrupt. In fact, that delicate "management" of the House could not be well abandoned. But just as the same acute observer had said truly that, though he affected to abuse the arts and intrigues which with his brother were government, he passively suffered or tolerated those arts in his auxiliaries by affecting to be superior to them, or ignorant of them. To be sure, they were dealing with Faction and Vipers, who declined the

"King's Bounty;" but there were plenty gifted with a truer and purer patriotism. But the news had a deeper interest for the politicians. The ministry was virtually broken up, for the correct and decent pedantry of the late premier had given a sort of respectable cohesion to the feeble elements he had brought together. Now, the pieces were separating by a sort of instinct, slowly drifting from each other like the fragments of a wreck. The ears of "faction" were pricked up, countless intrigues and burrowings went on below the surface—the strong, the weak, the dishonest, the feeble, the mediocre, now thought that their opportunity was come. There was the direct and vigorous soul of Pitt, the well-trained scheming of Fox, the craft of the Chancellor, the cold but dangerous Murray, and a perfect crowd of smaller intellects: yet that wonderful Duke of Newcastle—old, ridiculed, having lost his mainstay—was a match for all, and remained master of the situation. It is impossible not to admire the ingenuity with which this clever schemer, who has not had justice enough done to his abilities, contrived to baffle them all. Macaulay says

his conduct at this crisis was both "childish and base." But the reader will see that there was no childishness in the adroit *tactique* that made him first minister, and that baseness is too harsh a term for that selfish instinct of preservation which was the universal characteristic of every politician of his time.

Nothing beyond the mere outline of this curious intrigue has been given: and the inner details make up a most singular bit of secret political history. It began almost within a few minutes after Mr. Pelham had breathed his last. With almost indecent alacrity Fox was at work scouring the town.

It was felt that the earliest bird was secure of the political worm. In truth, minutes were precious. The duke and chancellor were tolerably secure in their friendship, and had, as it were, the strong lever of possession in their hands.

The Grenvilles and Lytteltons were in a flutter of anxiety as to the loaves of office; but the loaf that in any case could be set before them was so small, that the question really amounted to no more than this: whether they were to be first grave-digger or second officer.

The real point was, what was to be done with the eager impetuous man who was posting about London in his carriage, and the titular "tribune," who was down in the country racked with gout and pains almost unbearable, and who had to be lifted in and out of his coach. These were the two dangerous forces that must be approached. These two influences he dare not pass by; for with either of them he must descend to being a cipher in his own cabinet, and without them he could hardly stand an hour. Here was a problem. Yet plunged in maudlin though sincere grief for his brother's loss, the duke set himself to conjure, and the spell he found was "the king's name."

Fox, hurrying about town, was first dealt with. He did not indeed, as the saying runs, allow the grass to grow under his feet. Minutes and half-hours with him were golden. The minister died at six in the morning; before eight he was with Lord Hartington making offers; "within a few hours" he was closeted with Lord Hardwicke, on the same errand; and Pitt, down in the country, wrote to friends, how Mr. Fox had been calling at

his town house "early!" So industrious a postulant was sure to succeed—or, at least, deserved to forestall other candidates. To ask him to take office, and the highest office, was only as of course. The king had no objection: by the delicate agency of Lord Hartington, a treaty was speedily concluded. Fox was to be secretary, with management of the House, and *knowledge* of the disposal of the secret service money. The duke seemed to adopt him with alacrity, and took care publicly to notify this adhesion. But almost in a few hours, when they came together to settle details, there occurred that remarkable conversation in which Fox discovered that he was merely to speak for the government in the Lower House, but to have no power, and no dealing with corruption. The duke said plainly that must be his department. "My brother," he said, "never disclosed those secrets, nor shall I."* Fox protested, asking how was he to know what men had been paid, and what not. The duke said that, though

* The reader will see that there is a sort of corroboration here of Wraxall's story about Secretary Roberts and Pelham's secret book of bribes.

Fox was not to know, no one else should. Fox then asked who was to give the places. The duke answered, "I myself." "Who was to recommend?" "Any member of the House." "Had Mr. Pelham left a list of the proper members for the new House?" "That was all settled," the duke said, "with Lord Dupplin."

In short, Fox left the duke, seeing plainly that he was to be a mere deputy of the duke's in the Lower House. His position was most awkward. He had negotiated, he had accepted, he was committed hopelessly, and yet it would be folly to accept the mere shadow of office.

It was plain that he had been "bubbled," or he and his friends thought he had. This was held to be a monument of craft on the part of the duke. Fox took some days to consider the matter—a further foolishness—for if he had been "bubbled," he should have broken off at once. The duke being remonstrated with, honestly owned that he had changed his mind, that he had been in such grief and confusion that he had not seen the true bearing of what he had pro-

posed. After more irresolution, Fox finally declined in a curious letter.* He saw the king a day or two later, and spoke bitterly of how he had been treated. He said plainly that the duke was dishonest, had broken his word, and that he never could trust him again. The king said that he had *asked too* much; that many dukes had been content with what had been offered to him; that the secret service money had never been in any one's hands but the first minister's.

Now, with all these charges of dishonesty and "baseness," there was a good deal to be said for the duke. It *was* perfectly true that the "bribery" part of the "management" of the House always was in the hands of the first minister, and this was fresh in the king's

* "It is impossible," he wrote, "his Majesty could think of raising me to so exalted a station, but with a design that I should have the management of his affairs in the House of Commons. This was the whole tenor of your grace's message by Lord Hartington, which in your grace's conferences with Lord Hartington and me have been totally contradicted. Unable, therefore, to answer what I dare say is his Majesty's expectation (though your grace has frankly declared it not to be yours), that I should be answerable for his Majesty's affairs in the House of Commons, I beg leave to remain where I am," &c.

mind from a curious circumstance.* Mr. Pelham's *Livre Noir*, or "Black Book of Bribes," had remained in the hands of Roberts. The duke knew this, and was eager to secure so useful a guide to the House; but the "faithful" henchman declined to surrender it. The king was then told, and, as already related, Roberts was sent for to the palace, gave up the book, and saw it pushed between the bars of the grate by his Majesty's own hand. It is quite plain from this precaution that the king was alarmed at the existence of such written testimony, and it is not at all unlikely that this incident may have caused him to interpose, and stipulate that such delicate transactions should be confined to the man in whom he had real confidence. And though Fox in his letter affected to think the duke was acting in defiance of what the king had intended, it is plain, from the conversation just given, that the king felt even stronger on the matter than the duke did; but the real truth was, that to have handed over such powers to Fox would have

* This is more corroboration of the much-maligned Wraxall, one of whose gossiping stories fits in here with surprising aptitude, and throws light on this matter.

been to make him first minister, and have reduced the duke to a mere cipher. Whatever were the motives, here was Fox, stranded, if not wrecked—cleverly disposed of; for if his opposition to the new government became troublesome, he could be reminded that he had been rather too willing to join with them. He had also been reconciled to the king, becoming a sort of "king's friend"—an alliance that laid him under obligations that were independent of party.

CHAPTER V.

PITT.

But there was another huge vessel of war coming up through the fog, whom the duke had now to engage; yet here he was to be equally fortunate. Pitt was down at Bath, racked with pains, which were, of course, supposed to be "acted;" but there can be no question his sufferings were genuine. Still it was remarkable that, with every acute crisis of affairs, a more acute and agonizing fit of gout was invariably to seize upon him. At this conjuncture he affected an indifference, certainly feigned, if his malady was not. The news of the minister's death was a dreadful blow. He did not know what would become of the country. The loss was irreparable.

And here he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, eager to learn from his grace, not indeed any news about the momentous changes with which the duke was busy, but—something about a little borough! He waited the duke's commands about this matter: but all the time was sending away letters to his friends the Lytteltons and Grenvilles—making out plans, cautioning them warily, suggesting schemes for governments. In all these he was certainly loyal to Fox; but he proposed an odd change in what he called "the secularization" of Murray—that is, taking him out of his legal groove to make him Chancellor of the Exchequer. What the advantage of this step was—unless he foresaw Murray's later desertion to the King's Bench, and wished to secure him to the party—it would be hard to say. He even talked of the "duke's ability"—high praise from him. But already the scheme against him was working. The chancellor was writing to him in great confidence and concern about the duke's "overwhelming grief" for his brother, together with platitudes about the state of affairs and the welfare of the country. He reassured Pitt earnestly

as to any neglect of his friends. All would be explained and set right. Then the duke wrote a long, long letter of many pages, in a strain of artful and unbounded confidence and submission. A plan, he said, had been first made "to make my going to the head of the Treasury more palatable to those who should be the least pleased with it" (that is, the offer to Fox). But the place was now given to "an honourable man"—Sir Thomas Robinson; *his* promotion as a man of humble talents in Parliament could make no change in the situation. Then Legge was to be Chancellor of the Exchequer—an appointment that "was sure to please all our friends. *We knew he was happy in your friendship and good opinion,*" added the plausible old politician. Then there were Pitt's dear friends, Grenville and Lyttelton—they had all been taken care of. Complaisance to Pitt's influence had directed every step; the only thing wanting was complaisance to Pitt himself. The duke was coming to that. Nothing could be done in the present temper of the king's mind. It was hopeless in the face of such prejudices. "I feel for you, indeed," said the duke, "and I don't

wonder that you feel. *My love and affection for you are my only excuses.*" The only consolation was, that under another state of things, *i.e.*, if Fox had been in power, the mortification might have been worse. Time, however, would do a great deal to soften the king's prejudices. He would work to that end.

Strange to say, Pitt wrote back with great apparent gratitude, and there is a sort of rueful tone in his letter, as if he believed in the duke's representations. Only in one part his disappointment and anger broke out. As to mortification, he should have been *less* mortified. *had* Fox got in. He would have been only mortified for his grace and for the chancellor. To the latter he wrote in what seems real distress. This news of the king's enmity was weighing on him. "The weight of irremovable royal displeasure is a load too great to move under; *it has sunk and broken me.*" But whether he was sunk or broken, there was the duke, who was called "childish," master of the situation, secure in his grant as chief "king's friend," secure in the inferiority of his dependents, and in the divi-

sions of his enemies. His strategy on this occasion, to put it at the lowest, was by no means contemptible.*

It has often been said that the present age is one for the "rehabilitation" of condemned historical characters; for the restoring and new colouring of the damaged Dresden of biography. But if an opposite process were necessary, and the accepted figures were to be taken down, tested anew, and condemned as mere delf, it is to be feared Pitt, "the great commoner," would be the first to suffer. It is time, indeed, that the popular character —the great Englishman—the almost patriot —the only pure man in a crowd of corrupt statesmen and politicians—should be reviewed. Any one who consults the overgrown, but not unentertaining, mass of family letters and papers, the political correspondence of the men of those times, which it has been the fashion of late years to publish,† will find as

* I make no apology for going thus minutely through the stages of this curious intrigue. It has never been more than epitomized before; and it serves the purpose of this volume in throwing light on the strange politics of the day.

† See notably the four volumes of the Chatham Papers; the four, more dreary, volumes of the Grenville Papers; the extracts

he reads here and there some strange secret, and almost mean attitudes, not to be reconciled with the bold "patriot" gestures and "inflexible" purity the popular portrait has accustomed him to. He will find that from his first entrance into public life until the time he was secure in office, he was as much an intriguer for place and pension as the rest. Before 1750, he had obtained the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, and a little later the much-coveted English Pay Office;* and his "purist" character had become notoriously damaged with the mob, who made ironical ballads on his fall. He ought, at least, to have been satisfied with that handsome sinecure, yet we are not prepared to find him writing to the duke at Hanover—for whose character he must have had sincere contempt—humbly to ask "for more." The duke "had not failed to acquaint the king with the

from the Hardwicke MSS., given in Lord Hardwicke's life; and the Waldegrave Memoirs.

* Macaulay, in his brilliant epitome of Pitt's career, repeats the story of his never keeping the "floating balances" in his hands, and of his paying them over to the Bank of England. This is a mere bit of gossip, with no better authority than Almon's anecdotes.

zeal, satisfaction, and regard for his Majesty's 'honour and service,' exhibited in Pitt's letter," and hinted at "some arrangement which might be accepted with pleasure (by Pitt), *or seemingly so*." The patriot wrote back in a tumult of gratitude, that nothing could comfort him so much as any good office in *that place*; "where I deservedly stand in need of it so much, and where I have so much at heart *to efface the past by every action of my life*." This abject profession will no doubt come by surprise on every reader of the history of that day. For the past that was to be effaced was that bold and patriotic defence of the people from the encroachments of the crown, and from being sacrificed to the miserable intrigues of party. It is not that we are surprised to see so great a nature carrying out so crooked a policy, as to find him in so mean and abject an attitude, and before so mean and abject a master. But this is not all.

Accepting thus ruefully his own postponement, and really appearing to put faith in that assurance that time would gradually remove the king's objections, we find him, only a

month or two later, a little impatient for the coming of the royal sunshine. It is humiliating to hear the "official patriot" of England again appealing to his patron, and in the same piteous strain. "I had flattered myself," he complains, "that his grace would bring forward *an instrument of his own raising!*" He had hoped that by this time "some softening in the royal mind" would have exhibited itself. He was still decoyed by the old trickster and his party. Even to the agents he could humiliate himself in the same strain, and he could thank the chancellor who had been "keeping him quiet," and assure him that it was very kind and generous to suggest a ray of "distant general hope to a man you see despairing;"* and then he throws out the first hint of "a decent and innocent retreat," a mysterious allusion, which seems almost inconsistent with his pinings after royal favour. He shrinks now from public life and from "longer continuing in the stream of promotion

* The Pitt style is one of the curiosities of literature, for it always fluctuated between what Charles Lamb calls "the honing and moaning" of a desponding sick man, or the most stilted and empty declamation that ever found its way to paper.

and sticking fast aground *for ever*," and from "affording to the world the ridiculous figure of being passed by every boat that navigates the same river." And yet, considering that he had reached the safe and commodious creek of the Pay Office, he could hardly be said to have been passed by the other boats. This "retreat," he says to them plainly, "must not be void of advantage," and in conclusion abases himself once more. "For to your joint protection, and *to that only*, I wish to owe the *future satisfaction of my life*."*

But presently, as he saw that the clouds did not break, and as he brooded over the preferment of others, and saw no chance of his getting to the "decent and innocent retreat" he coveted, he began to show, by meaning bursts and a fierce sarcasm, that he was not pleased.

In this shuffle the busy fingers of Charles Townshend were, of course, conspicuous. He pushed hard for the Treasury, and intrigued harder; but he was just the class of man that

* Lord Stanhope seems to take an indulgent view of these strange proceedings, and hints that friends of Pitt might accept all this as a wish for "quiet retirement."

the duke would scarcely tolerate in conspicuous office. But still he had to be conciliated, and was put off with a Lordship of the Admiralty. The clever duke, it was noticed, had stopped the mouths of all the orators with place. Legge, who was at the Exchequer, and Sir Thomas Robinson, whom Pitt considered a worthy, honourable man, but with no more capacity for leading the House than his own jack boot, was secretary. He was called "long Sir Thomas," was half a foreigner, and three parts a German, from his residence at foreign courts, and so ignorant of the ways of Englishmen, that his mistakes in debate constantly produced laughter. However, he was a true "king's friend." Every one wondered, but every one accepted. The universal minister had it all his own way. "I don't know," said Walpole, "if there are not more parts in governing without genius!" When he went to Court, where his feelings overpowered him, the scene was comically described. He sank down at the foot of the stairs, crying, and the yeomen had to drag him up under the arms. At the closet door he tumbled down before the king, sobbing, "God bless your Majesty," and lay

there howling and kissing the king's knees, with one leg out. The husband of the beautiful Lady Coventry was in waiting, and in comic agony begged the curious spectators to withdraw: "For God's sake, gentlemen, don't look at a great man in his distress!" and trying to shut them out, caught the duke's gouty foot and made him roar. This was all grief for his brother, and, though absurd enough in the manner, is something to his credit.

But Charles Townshend, now happily in office, was thinking of domestic concerns. There was a widowed Lady Dalkeith, a daughter of the Duke of Argyll, who some years before had attracted attention by forming an amateur company of Scotch nobility, and getting up Dr. Young's tragedy of "The Revenge." The performance was only indifferent. Not long after she had lost her husband by a sort of small-pox pestilence which seems to have raged in their family like a murrain. He died in three days; his brother in two, whose limbs actually dropped off as they were putting him into the coffin. They were considered to live very happily together in hat age of conjugal indifference, and she was

posting to his bedside, when the ignorant physicians told her it was only "a miliary fever."

She was an heiress; and a wealthy and titled widow must have been eagerly regarded. Soon Walpole was writing to his friends that the lively Townshend had gained the prize, and was to marry "the great dowager" next month. His comment on this event is—"His parts and presumption are prodigious. He wanted nothing but independence to let him loose." He now, therefore, laid out great entertainment for himself in seeing this brilliant man cast off all restraint and give full reins to genius, without the check of straitened means. It was indeed a conquest. It was considered, too, that he had married into a family of "the best people in the world," who would only think of making her happy. The marriage took place in August, 1754.

CHAPTER VI.

ADULLAM.

THE new Parliament had met. They were busy with petitions and minor matters, but no great questions had, as yet, come to the surface. But Pitt and Fox, who had been brooding over their injuries, showed signs of discontent. Pitt had told the duke that his "words" had little significance with him. Chafing with disappointment and disgust, he cast about for some object to gibbet. Sir Thomas was too mean for his powers. Murray was a more splendid butt, who, in this session, seemed to have lost heart, and was of small use to his government. Pitt almost amused himself by a series of savage attacks, to which the other seemed to have lost power to reply. Fox

took the unfortunate leader of the House to himself.

No entertainment can be finer than reading of the way in which these two discontented and "sulky" statesmen indemnified themselves for the treatment they had received. A young member was convulsing the House with his buffoonery, on the subject of bribery at his own election, filling the remotest benches with uncontrollable laughter, when Pitt stalked down from the gallery, and with his sternest and most awful manner cowed them like a set of schoolboys. A pin could have been heard to drop. Was this the way, he asked with infinite scorn, to support their dignity in such times, to be laughing at such a thing as bribery? If that was the course they were to pursue, they would soon sink into a little assembly *serving no other purpose than to register the arbitrary edicts of one too powerful a subject!* Every one was aghast at this tremendous thunder, and Murray, it was noticed, turned ghastly pale, and was seen actually to crouch down with terror. He went on in the same fine strain of denunciation, and supposed they would come to be "an appendix

to—I know not what—I have no name for it."

No one dared to say a word. All were panic-struck, until Legge, with some spirit, said that, as for the dignity of the House, his belief, his humble belief, was that real Whig principles could alone sustain it; "by which," he added, "whether sooner or later, whatever is to be my fate, I am determined to stand or fall."

This burst of Pitt's was in every one's mouth. It made the poor duke ill. It was, indeed, a dark cloud before the storm; every one was talking of it; but, on that very evening, something more was to happen. An election petition question came on, in which poor "prosy" Sir Thomas made the incautious remark, that it was a "short" matter and a "poor" one, and could not take any time, and was unimportant generally. Pitt, who had as it were tasted blood in the morning, now flung himself on him. That was a pretty style for the first officer in the state to speak in—to judge a cause in that flippant way, before it had been heard! This was a specimen of the wretched state of things to

which they were hurrying.* The unhappy Sir Thomas, baited to his last extremity, answered with passion and warmth, and an absurd pomp. That he must show spirit—he appealed to the House—to the merchants, to the gentlemen—if mere words and power of eloquence was to treat him in this way. Pitt then replied, and very roughly. Then Fox interposed, and with ironical commendation praised the poor secretary for his twenty years' foreign labours, but admitted he was indiscreet, and perhaps did not know English customs and habits. Sir Thomas did not relish this sort of defence, and attacked Pitt with fresh clumsiness. He had never sought office. He had not been ambitious for it. Pitt replied, with admirable scorn, that if any one else had been, *he* should never have got it, adding derisively, that he thought him as able as any man that had lately filled the office, or was likely to fill it. It must have been a fine exhibition.*

* This scene is from Fox's as well as from Walpole's account. Fox's will be found in the notes to Lord Waldegrave's curious memoirs, and is a generous tribute to his rival's power. It is written in a spirit of unbounded admiration.

But in a few days again, Pitt, still in his fury, once more fell on Murray with one of his finest bursts. He was brought up by an absurd speech of Nugent's, who had said that he did not know a more honest man than the duke, and then diverged to such topics as there being no Tories or Jacobites in the ministry. This was a text for Pitt. In a delightful speech, he told stories, used playful illustrations from natural history, and thence glided into a strain of bitter invective, to dwell upon Jacobitism. If any man told him that such did not exist, he would not believe him. Oxford was the very nursery of Jacobitism. He himself had seen in that town Jacobite pictures in the shop-windows, with disloyal Latin inscriptions. That university was full of treason, and like the hen who was set to hatch the eggs of other birds—the moment the chicks broke the shell, they made for the water. All this time his eyes were upon Murray, against whom this had always been a favourite scandal; and that accomplished orator was again seen to shrink and cower under the attack. As Fox said, he suffered agonies for a whole hour, while Pitt, in a speech that ex-

torted the admiration of at least two acute and competent listeners, with exquisite art wrung his very withers. It has always seemed most mysterious why Murray, a brilliant and accomplished debater, the most eloquent and unprofessional in the line of law officers, and who was but a step from the Woolsack, should have stopped short suddenly in his career, and fled as if panic-struck to the cold prosaic atmosphere of the King's Bench. Lord Campbell and other writers explain it by his devotion to his profession, his settled purpose to rise by it and make it the chief end of his life. But the Chancellorship was surely the fitting crown for professional life; and the reward which came without effort to the obscure and mediocre Ryder, was a very humble goal for an intellect like the one Pope has celebrated in his poetry. The true solution seems to be that he was terror-struck and utterly cowed by Pitt's relentless persecution, that he had lost speech and heart, was utterly unnerved, and only thought of a speedy retreat from such agonies as that dreadful master of invective made him suffer so publicly.

The strangest part of all these proceedings

was, that the two discontented chiefs were actually in office and receiving the king's pay, and owed allegiance to the duke. It was at one time proposed to turn out Pitt, as a punishment for his behaviour. But everything favoured the duke, even to the bungling of Lyttelton, Pitt's friend; who, when he heard the rumour, went unaccredited on a mission to bring in the Duke of Bedford to supply Newcastle's place. This foolish baronet had indeed "sounded" the duke as to the general advantage it would be to have the duke, and the duke had said, as generally, that it would indeed be desirable. The result was, indignation on the side of Newcastle, who went straight to Pitt, and a break-up between Pitt and his friend. Lyttelton was disavowed by all parties; the whole caused immense delight at the clubs. Lord Temple christened him the Apostolic Nuncio, and Selwyn supposed he would, of course, be asked with the *corps diplomatique*. The attempt to retain Fox without Pitt showed indeed knowledge of the meaner instincts; for that has always been found an infallible system for breaking up the hollow alliance of rivals. Though it comically suggested to Lord Bath the

story of the chamberlain in the Gunpowder Plot, who had removed ten of the twenty-five barrels of powder, and hoped the rest would do no harm. The smart tone of politics had sharpened every wit.

Charles Townshend was already faltering. It was said that his brother George, the caricaturist, was working on him. But it was indeed only natural that a man of his genius should be discontented with the state of things in the ministry, and the small share allowed to him. The promotion of creatures like Robinson and Lyttelton—beings whom he despised—must have been galling to him; and now Fox, an intellect of his own class, had taken up the *rôle* which was more peculiarly his own. He had now therefore for some time back been looking on in a fit of political sulk and pettishness, and, though taking Treasury money and holding Treasury offices, was openly finding fault with his employers. This was only according to the odd precedent of the day, and owing to the miserable state to which the practice of accepting a powerful man as a powerful party had brought the House. His ill-humour soon found a sort of neutral victim.

Lord Egmont, a good debater, and a *quasi* "patriot," had been tampered with by the ministerialists, and all but gained by the promise of the Treasurer's place. That such a person should be thought worthy of buying up, and he himself be passed over, added to his ill-humour; so that when Lord Egmont began speaking in his old strain against stretching the royal prerogative, and the infamy of fixing despotic military law on men born free, Charles started up, and, with great warmth and a contemptuous tone, flung himself on the intending pervert. Upon him he spent all his irony and ill-humour. He had been furious that a man of such inferior parts had been promoted over his head, attacked him with extraordinary spirit and irony, defended his old Board of Trade, jeeringly bade Lord Egmont "take the poor American by the hand," begged of him to point out any grievance in that respect, hinted that his lordship had been in the habit of pointing out grievances as a sort of patriot, and he should be glad to learn the reason why he did not intend to do so *now*, and then hinted very plainly that the new place had tied his tongue. The nobleman was

utterly cowed and abashed by the savageness of this attack; he replied in great disorder, and was actually scared, as Townshend intended he should be, from taking the post. This feat in so young a man is a singular instance of audacity and successful insolence.

An unimportant question as to whether some minor Scotch magistrates should continue to hold their offices only during the king's pleasure—a measure rendered necessary by the rebellion—again brought on a vigorous discussion. It was opposed with great warmth by Charles Townshend, on broad constitutional grounds, going back to the principles of the Revolution. He hoped those attached to the ministry, "generally the most unfeeling," would really think of what was involved in the matter. For his part he neither meant ambition nor popularity, but that he looked on himself as "an executor" of the men of the days of 1688. In the main, this was all levelled at Murray, who had made the incautious statement that there was not a Jacobite left in Scotland. It was, in short, another of those singular scenes in which was exhibited the spectacle of the ministerial Actæon torn by

its own dogs. Lord George Sackville answered him with spirit and with good argument. He laughed at the high tone Townshend had imported into the matter, as though they were dealing with the judges of Westminster, and not with some petty Scotch magistrates, whose jurisdiction was bounded by the value of twelve pounds. Murray then tried to defend his plan, quoting Charles I. and James II., and sat down; then with trembling must have seen his persistent enemy rise to attack him. This became another of Pitt's fine personal invectives. He complimented him ironically on his allowing *some* force to the principles of the Revolution; but mercilessly dealt with his legal distinctions and refinements. He had more dread, he said, of arbitrary power dressing itself up in the long robe than of even military power. He should not go back to draw *precedents from the diabolical divans of James and Charles!* These were daggers for Murray, and again all to the old theme. In conclusion, he asked, why was this attempted? *Was it to make Mr. Pelham more regretted?* And with this stroke at the premier this terrible scourge of debate sat down.

In the meantime the king, in more alarm for his darling Hanover than for the islands he ruled, had inaugurated the demoralizing system of subsidies, and, as was well said, had opened a shop at Herenhausen, where every little German dukelet that could put a uniform on a soldier might repair and traffic in his wares. In this way, a contract was made with the little state of Hesse; and Russia, as Macaulay says with such contempt, was "hired" to keep Prussia in awe. But these brought great dangers for the ministry. Pitt was losing all patience; he was not to be put off longer with the absurd stories of the king's anger against him, and imperiously demanded whether he was to be taken into office on the first opportunity. Never was a ministry menaced with such perils. These were from within as well as from without. For even in these days "trimming" and disappointed members had discovered the safe refuge of the notorious "Cave," and could take refuge there, like political hermits of a superior sanctity and conscience. Legge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer — a mediocre statesman, but a man of wit—when the treaty

was proposed to him, was seized with the pangs of political remorse, and refused to sign it. This early "Adullamite"—to use a term now grown fashionable—was a strange spectacle; for the desertion of a supporter might be intelligible, but an insubordinate Chancellor of the Exchequer must have been a hard trial for his colleagues. The fashion of his opposition was the more vexatious as, after the Hessian treaty had been obsequiously signed by their lordships of the council, some of the foreign bills arrived at the Treasury to be cashed; and Legge, who had the mere ministerial office of giving effect to this paper by his signature, peremptorily declined to do so. This was a mere technical obstruction, but it was an obstruction.*

And this question was welcome to all ene-

* This surprising contumacy in an inferior member of the ministry has been interpreted by Walpole and others as a bit of craft—as if one of the rats came rushing from their holes through fear of the ship settling down. But the ministerial vessel was not yet water-logged; a hundred chances might save her; and it is notorious that the underlings and smaller placemen will refuse to abandon their vessel so long as a single plank gives them a something to cling to. Legge's refusal would seem to have been more a kind of self-sufficient scruple, and a sense of his own importance.

mies of the Government as a fine opportunity for raising one of those broad constitutional questions which are so welcome to Opposition, as depriving faction of the very air of faction. On such occasions men can conveniently affect to sacrifice their feelings and prejudices, their ties of obligation, and make all bend to the grand "service of the country." There was no mistaking the storm that was coming. The crafty duke boldly sent for Pitt and tried hard to soothe him, and offered him the king's favour.* But it was too late now. Nothing could be done. The only concession he would make was, that in compliment to the king he would support the little Hessian subsidy, but "not a system."

Failing with Pitt, then the duke, thoroughly scared, went to Fox, made terms, turned the poor baited "long Sir Thomas" out, and made Fox Secretary of State.†

No wonder that Fox wrote to Rigby and to

* I have not been able to find any authority for the odd picture drawn by Macaulay of this interview, of his hugging, patting, and weeping over his visitors.

† Sir Thomas was comforted with a lucrative office and a pension of 2000*l.* a year for himself and his sons out of the unfortunate Irish establishment.

the Bedford convention, that there was to be a session stormy enough to satisfy even *him*. It indeed required courage to look forward to what was coming. Pitt infuriated, Murray cowed, and other supporters faint-hearted or meditating desertion. Even at the cockpit, where Fox assembled his followers to hear the royal speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend, and the Grenvilles, all absented themselves, so that when the treaties* came on matters looked unpromising indeed. This debate was the finest of these many fine debates; for, independent of the principle involved, it had the always dramatic element of the life of a ministry being at stake. Every one spoke well and earnestly on the desperate state of things. Grenville asked mournfully, if this were a specimen of their caution, what would their imprudence be like? Young Hamilton made his famous speech, in which the least remarkable thing was his perfect ease and self-possession. A less fortunate *début* was that of young Stanhope, whom his father had carefully prepared for the occasion, but who "broke down," as he did in

* November and December, 1755.

those "graces" in which his father had been equally careful to prepare him. He had to fumble for his notes, and sit down.

Then Murray, at last taking courage, very humbly appealed to the mercy of the House for an aged king, now at the end of his days, and whose heart was in this little Hanover. Did he care for repose, it would have been easy to have patched up a peace with the French that would have done for the short span of his life. But he preferred the nation's honour. Would they now in return sow his pillow with thorns in reference to this Hanover business? He got moved over his own pathos, and overdid the whole absurdly.

But Pitt's scornful eye was on him. Pitt, chafing, furious at his rival's desertion, and now inspired by what was to him a national question—after the thin dribble of obscurer speaking had vented itself—rose, at half-past one in the morning, and in a superb oration of an hour and a half surpassed himself. It was like a torrent bursting from a dam. He passed over nothing in his exquisite scorn and bitter candour. All they had been treated with, did it amount to more than this:

"Follow your leader"? Then he turned round suddenly and with open contempt on his friend Lyttelton, who had been quoting Grotius and the publicists, and reminded "the gentleman near him" that Nature was the best writer in the world. She will teach us to be men, and not to tremble. Then he went on to affect to lament that he was at a distance from that *sanctum sanctorum* whither the priest goes up for inspiration. He protested against the cruel use that was made of the king's name as a parliamentary instrument; it was degrading the king, and degrading them all. He had long noticed their dignity dwindling, sinking. As for himself, he felt deep gratitude for *some late condescending goodness and gracious openings*—one of those close, fine, classical phrases which seem to come from him with special weight—but as for Fox, he could only pity "that man." As for arguments, obliged to wander wearily through the wilderness, shut in by the mountains, and not able to catch a gleam to direct him to the beauties of these negotiations, how was he to unravel such mysteries? Then the silent and wondering House, awe-struck, and not

knowing what was coming of this affected ignorance, saw the great orator strike his forehead. "Yes," he cried, "I too am inspired now—it strikes me! I remember at Lyons to have been carried to see the conflux of the Rhone and the Saone—this a gentle, feeble stream and, though languid, of no depth; but the other a boisterous and impetuous torrent. But they meet at last." Every one listening made the application at once of this fine simile to Fox and Newcastle. Thence he proceeded on the same theme: he knew nothing—he could not make out the feebleness of what was tottering along on so many legs. But he knew now whose child it was, and who was breeding it up. Thence in the same bitter tone he went back—reviewed old ministries formed out of corrupt unions, and what he called "daring, wicked councils." Out of such sprang a ministry: what if one were to spring out of present councils? Yet he saw that former one: in the morning it flourished—it was green at noon—by night it was cut down and forgotten. These denunciations—most happily forecasting the suspicious politics of "the Cave"—must have told with

tremendous effect. Then, having finished his survey of past and present, of things abroad and at home, he had all but done; but he had kept a last arrow for Murray, whose heart must have been in his mouth as the orator turned round to him. He denounced that "pathetic picture" of the king as prepared and premeditated. *He* could draw one as pathetic of an English king away at Hanover, hemmed in all the summer by a crowd of scared Germans, and with no one to represent England near to him. *That* was a more miserable and pathetic picture, was it not? Then he took up Murray's image of the king's last days, and his thorny pillow, and thundered out that in a couple of years later the king would not be able to sleep at St. James's for the cries of a bankrupt people. All this fine matter was set off with every variety of action and manner, and play of face and voice. It lasted an hour and a half, and, though the debate had been dragging on for nearly ten hours, he was listened to with an attention that was almost breathless. But the crafty duke was sure of his majority—and there were other spells more potent, of which magicians like the Mackays and Brad-

shaws had the working; the king's name was a spell not to be resisted, and the subsidy was carried through by a large majority. Fox, after the debate, affected not to know whether he was alluded to as the Rhone, and there was actually some discussion among the members as to whether the duke, or the chancellor, or Murray was meant. It was quite plain. At the close of this spirited debate a characteristic incident occurred. When the division was called, the "Noes" left the House, while the "Ayes" remained, according to the custom of that day. Charles Townshend, Pitt, and Legge, stayed behind to the last, talking; and such was their carelessness or excitement, that these three leaders of the Opposition were actually "shut out," and had to vote for the treaties they opposed! For this mortification we may be sure the erratic Charles was wholly accountable.

On this victory the ministry, with some spirit, got rid of their disaffected followers. Pitt, Legge, and George Grenville were dismissed, "Jemmy" Grenville resigned, and Charles Townshend, our hero, went off to Pitt, and faintly proposed resigning his place, if Mr. Pitt

wished it. Pitt said scornfully he wished no man to resign on his account. Charles, in fact, was wise enough to see who was likely to come to power, and from this time became almost obsequious to the great master; but he could not yet make up his mind.

There were some odd features in that spirited discussion, and not the least singular was to hear Lyttelton hotly answering his friend Grenville, and Pitt "putting down" his friend Lyttelton. They had got into a confusion almost ludicrous. The fact was, a wrong issue had been taken. A distinct motion should have been made impeaching the policy of the ministry, and it was felt that success on the present one would have been only a censure on the king himself. Still it was a victory.

The public accepted it as such, looked on, and wondered what was to come next. The Tories, hating both Pitt and Fox, sat by and delighted in looking at the two as they "mumbled" and mauled each other.

CHAPTER VII.

BATTLES.

But now Pitt's dismissal was infusing an acrimony and personal tone into the discussions, which gave them a warmth and fine dramatic vitality. There had been a bitter debate, on a proposal for raising seamen, in which Fox and Pitt rose alternately, again and again, each striving to have the last thrust. Pitt, with a sort of sardonic despondency, affected to deplore the miserable condition of the Government; which arose, he said, from little struggles for the thing they called power. The whole of this wretched country was being hurried to ruin by the silly pride of one man, and the wretched incapacity and timidity of his colleagues. This was too good from the man

who himself had been eager and willing to serve the "silly pride" of the duke, and the retort came bitterly from Fox. As to the motive of "struggles," *let those*, he said, with his eye on Pitt, *who have struggled most and longest for power, tell.* And the House by a roar of hearty assent showed that they enjoyed and approved the thrust. Pitt was on his feet in a moment. He said, scornfully, that he saw they all enjoyed what had been said. He could only tell them that he had been tempted, and that if he had chosen to consent to degrading conditions he *might have been in that august place.* Fox again rose. He would pass by the gentleman's former remark, that there was no sense nor virtue near the throne, but——. Again the impetuous Pitt rose to *order.** He denied using such words; Mr. Fox's modesty had taken them to himself. He then rambled off, in a sort of fury, to all sorts of topics. *He* was not in the habit of going to Arthur's (a club which he contemptuously spoke of as "the place where so

* Dr. Carlyle and some young Scotchmen who went to hear Pitt for the first time, were struck with the contemptuous arrogance with which he seemed to treat the House, as if it was a school. Some members who had spoken well he affected to pass by as unworthy of being noticed.

many bets were made"), but if he might talk familiarly, he would be inclined to bet a little on Mr. Fox's *sense* and spirits. This contemptuous ignoring of the common vulgar clubs and such things, is quite characteristic of that fine, but perhaps affected, stoicism. Fox answered him moderately, and with wonderful calmness assured the House that, on his honour, he did not know anything of the mysterious offers to which Mr. Pitt alluded. But then Murray, with placid eloquence, and unusual courage, began with affected surprise that Pitt should make objections to Mr. Pelham's measure. He thought that gentleman had died in perfect friendship with the late minister. Again Pitt interrupted in a fury of scorn. His friendship for Pelham had been as *real* as Murray's. The latter, with assumed indifference, pretended to receive this as a correction or a bit of information, and went on to deplore the statesman's loss. If he were alive we should have fewer *struggles*. By the way, might he ask, merely for his own satisfaction and for the information of some near him, though he might have misunderstood, had he heard Mr. Pitt say *that he had refused the office of Secretary of State?* Pitt, baited to

fury by this insufferable matter-of-fact view, once more had to stand up and answer that he had not been offered it.

This duelling was all very fine. Shortly after came on another debate about encouragement to seamen, in which the question of press-gangs was raised. That true squire, Mr. Haldane, had talked of "his Majesty's service" again and again, and of seamen that lurked and loitered at home when his Majesty had need of them; and that, for his part, he thought such skulkers richly deserved to be pressed into "his Majesty's" sea service as much as vagabonds did to be pressed into his Majesty's land service. Dundas, the Advocate, made a Scotch speech in defence of the system. The military, he said, were used not to press, but merely as an escort for the press-gang and to restrain violence. This brought up Charles Townshend, who made a solid "national" speech, full of good logic. Did the Government mean war or peace? If war, why do they oppose a measure like the present, calculated to strengthen their hands for war? If peace, did they mean to make our navy as useless as our army, or did they

mean to *command* or *beg* for it? In which was implied a fresh dilemma, though he did not develope it. How were they to command it if they were to weaken our navy? but if to meanly beg for it—goodness! what a situation! the Administration purposely weakening the government of the nation and Opposition supporting it! Then, turning on Dundas, he showed the ready gift of stripping a fallacy bare; and yet it was merely *en passant*, but done with the light smarting touch for which he was famous. The distinction between the military and the press was worthy of Dunscotus and the casuists. If the soldiers did not press, but were only to protect the gang, by the same rule the gang did not press, but were only there to protect the officer who had the warrant in his pocket!

Fox opposed the bill. He affected to refine on the word "now;" but while he sneered at the importation of pathos into the debate, he affected to call up the memory of Sir Robert Walpole with a deeper pathos. He could wish that all who recalled Sir Robert thought of that minister as *he* did!

This brought up Pitt again. Growing

every day more and more envenomed, he retorted on Fox, that after quibbling on such words as "now," there was no fear of *his* falling into pathos. Fox might now boast of his attachment to Walpole; but though he (Pitt) had always opposed him fearlessly, yet, after his fall, he always spoke well of him as a man. The House here tittered; but the speaker turned on them with stern severity, and told them theirs was but blundering laughter; unless, indeed, they thought it more honourable to have no respect for a man when he had fallen.

During these days Charles became acquainted, through Fox, with the well-known Miss Bellamy, and was often met behind the scenes. That sprightly actress had some influence with Mr. Fox, and boasts even of being admitted into the little junta that met at his house. She hints, too, which is most probable, that Fox encouraged her to try and obtain some influence over Charles with a view of fixing him to their party. One night, Mr. Townshend, on coming behind the scenes, and hearing of some fresh extravagance of the actress, proceeded seriously to lecture her on "her want

of stability." This was admirable; the shuttlecock of the day setting up as a mentor! But history and biography are stocked with such inconsistencies.

In the midst of his politics he was always ready with a boisterous, reckless jest, on that account all the more acceptable. At the opera, on an April night, one of the stage army fell down on the stage in a fit of apoplexy, which caused a little sensation in the house; but the notorious Miss Chudleigh, who was present, went off in such hysterical screams and kicking that the whole house was thrown into confusion. Several other ladies, says a malicious reporter, also present, who were *getting ready their fits*, found themselves so completely distanced that they changed their minds. Old Mr. Charles Stanhope, Sterne's friend, next day, at Lady Townshend's, asked what was the medical name of that class of fits; and Charles Townshend immediately answered him —"The true convulsive fits, to be had only of the maker."

CHAPTER VIII.

"ETERNAL INVECTIVES."

In December came on a discussion on raising fresh soldiers, in which Pitt and Fox again struggled and fought; and the ludicrous features in which were an absurd panegyric of Nugent's on the duke's virtues and honesty, and a no less absurd panegyric of the ejected "long" Sir Thomas Robinson on himself. He spoke with all the airs of a martyr. He was responsible for the sins of the last year. He took them on himself. *Me me adsum qui feci.* It was the happiest year he had ever spent. No man was so fitted for the king's closet as he was from his virtue and courage —it was not for him to say understanding. And all this egotistical verbiage was sprinkled

with Latin quotations like *fortiter in re, virtutem extendere factis,* and the like.

This tempting performance brought up Charles Townshend, who said, very acutely, that no one seemed to care to defend the system of the party, but only selfishly to defend themselves at all sacrifices. He then reviewed the American politics and mismanagement, French encroachments, &c.—a subject he was making himself up in. This policy was ruinous and should be changed; or if the ministry did not choose to change their policy, let them always secure such a defender as Sir Thomas, who had defended them so well. He afterwards spoke more temperately in many debates, but always with force and severity, especially on a prize bill discussion.

Hume Campbell must have had one of the fine, vigorous, and courageous intellects common in that day. Indeed, it must be said that the Scotch, with all the public odium that was levelled against them, had most creditable, and even brilliant, champions in the House, who contrast curiously with the tame, and almost commercial, class of delegate that crosses the

Tweed in our own day. Campbell had a fearless, trenchant style, in which he hit hard, and did much damage. He protested against this growing system of unbounded abuse of men. Distinct charges should be made and supported, and not this reckless declamation and denunciation—these *eternal invectives*, which were so insidious. Strangers took notes, and the accusations were published abroad, and *our superiors*—an incautious expression—brought into unjust odium. Murray supported him timidly, and, shrinking from Pitt, took a strictly professional view, special pleading on the Act of Settlement. We can almost hear his careful, faltering voice, and see his cautious steps. There was nothing that could give offence to his persecutor. It was a mere legal argument.

It was noted that Pitt allowed several other speeches to intervene; while his face seemed to be gathering rage and contempt. He had been touched rather nearly by Hume Campbell's remark, which had no doubt been welcomed heartily by the Tories in the House. He rose at last, and made one of his bitterest and most personal speeches, with every inflection of contempt. He turned it admirably on

Campbell, who had once been fond of "eternal invectives" himself, and had called Sir Robert Walpole "a tympany of corruption." They had once moved together, and trod the same path of invective. But the Court, in all times, could always command *a servile lawyer* for any purpose. In the profligate prerogative reign of James I. there was *a great duke* in power also, and there was a member who dared to describe the duke as a *spotted weasel*, and even then there was found *a servile lawyer* who called for punishment on that honest burgess! Campbell was sitting three benches above, and Pitt then turned round—a favourite oratorical device of his—and looked at him steadily: "I will not," he went on, "dress up this image any longer under a third person. I apply it to him. His is the slavish doctrine, *he is the slave*; and the shame of the doctrine will stick to him so long *as his gown sticks to his back.* But *his trade*," added Pitt, "is words. To me they are not objects of terror, but of contempt and ridicule."

Now came Murray's turn. Pitt turned round to him with slow premeditation. He had not forgotten how that law officer had, with the

desperation of long agony, at last turned on him. "This brings me to another learned gentleman; but it is really difficult to know where to pull the first thread from a piece so finely spun." Then he proceeded, with infinite sarcasm and real argument, to demolish Murray's legal quibbles. Nothing could be finer, or more bitter. He wished he could hear no more of these shining lights of Westminster. The long robe was made diligent use of in all arbitrary times. "How often had they attacked Magna Charta with refinements, and humiliation of the royal prerogative!" This personality was almost going too far. Yet it is impossible not to admire the magnificence, as well as variety, of his endless invectives against this unhappy lawyer. What was the origin of this sudden animosity against a man whom he had proposed to secularise? It is hard to divine the exact motive of this *vendetta*, but we may fairly suspect that Murray's indiscreet exhibition of all the symptoms of terror at Pitt's chronic attacks, held him out as a tempting object of assault. Pitt was no doubt delighted with the results of his own power, and was

encouraged to go on. He used even to play with his victim. Every one seems to have noticed the state of almost abject terror in which he kept Murray. One of the greatest of English conveyancers tells of a scene that almost excites pity. How when Pitt was in the midst of one of his "eternal invectives," Murray chanced to come into the House; Pitt's eye fell on him, and suggested to him a new topic. "I now come," he said, "to speak about the right honourable gentleman. My words shall be few, *but they shall be daggers.*" He paused. The agonized terror of the unhappy lawyer struck even him. He felt some pity, and, perhaps with secret satisfaction at his own power, passed him by for the present. The look of relief in Murray's countenance was as marked as had been his terror.

No wonder that the House had become fascinated by these wonderful exhibitions, and sat often until the small hours. At every effort Pitt was really exceeding himself. As the most acute observer of all the members present said, "Oh, you never heard such an invective as Pitt returned! Campbell was annihilated; like an angry

wasp, he seems to have left his sting in the wound."

In Committee, on the same subject, Charles Townshend, throwing off all restraint, spoke with great boldness against the ministers. His speech spread over three-quarters of an hour. It was a torrent of words delivered with infinite vehemence and gesticulation, and a surprising cleverness of animation. He followed up the text given out by Pitt against Hume Campbell, and took his cue from the inimitable sarcasm of the patriot. He might be said *to offend his superiors*, or to be misrepresented by *some new convert*, yet he would not hesitate. He would speak his opinion. Then he dwelt on the politics of Europe with great liveliness and variety; insisted on Prussia being conciliated; that the king had had the best dispositions, but they had alienated him, and then tried, unsuccessfully, to bring him round. Instead of which we had an exhibition of that "*petulant mechanic activity*, sometimes seen in the persons of some ministers." This was a capital stroke at his own uncle the Duke of Newcastle's present policy; and that happy phrase, "petulant mechanic

activity," might almost seem a description in anticipation of a foreign secretary who was to succeed more than a hundred years later. He, too, Pitt said, had his allies in the servile lawyers. The whole country was filled with reports as to the awful *corruption* that was abroad. Now, said he, in conclusion, show that you are independent, and are bound *to no superiors.* And then complimenting Pitt, he bade them imitate the virtue and integrity of those who have spurned everything inconsistent with their honour, though he had heard that their eloquence was considered a sort of exhibition or pastime, and that we were foolish in listening to it.

He then ranged over all the European politics, represented Russia as a quartermaster, making an assignation with France to come "to a place called Hanover," and then, whispering together, "Prussia is in our way; but he is in a good humour, so we must not provoke him." Hume Campbell told him in reply that in some points he had no *superior*, in some no equal; and Pitt, closing the debate towards three in the morning, repaid some of Charles Townshend's compliments, by saying

that he had displayed such abilities as had not been known since that House was a house. While Fox sarcastically declared, in allusion to Townshend's European politics, that there was nothing for which he so much envied Charles Townshend as his acquaintance with the interior councils and plans of the King of Prussia.

The man who had made the speech the like of which the House had not heard since it was a house, was at once dismissed from office by masters he had so boldly attacked. So sprightly, so vigorous were the parliamentary battles at this season—especially as given in the delightful sketches of Walpole—that it is no wonder he should speak of it as an era more than usually brilliant, and count up some thirty names of parliamentary captains, all of whom were more or less remarkable. The prestige of Townshend becomes, therefore, more singular and of more value.

A few days later a question was referred to the House, and again a debate was raised. Again Murray was put forward, and again Pitt fell on him in a fresh speech, more full of wit and illustration than of bitterness. His

gestures were as fine as those of Garrick. Indeed, it was noticed that since his tremendous success of late, he had good-naturedly altered his style, and adopted a tone of fine light banter and ridicule. Murray had found courage to apply the fable of the Wolf and the Shepherd to the King of Prussia, which Pitt turned on him, hoping that the king would not hear that he had been described as a beast (*feræ naturæ*). He sneered at Murray's long speech, who had not wit enough to compress his thoughts, and who had spoken long in the hope of burying the question in a cloud of words. Truly life must have been growing unendurable to the Attorney-General, but the treaties were adopted by large majorities.

Hume Campbell was rewarded with an office of 1200*l.* a year, to grant him which the occupant had to be pensioned off with the same amount! But Charles Townshend, who had made such an attack on his masters, had to suffer; and had now received his *congé*.

Indeed, he must have been intolerable as a servant, dangerous as an ally. How characteristic was such behaviour as this: Often when he had made an attack, he would cross the

House, and sitting down beside those he had just attacked, actually turn into ridicule the men of his own party who were defending their common cause! In such conduct there was a sort of wantonness; but, as will have been seen, this all came from a natural contempt and disgust at the miserable pretences and hollow political shams of the time, which he saw through and could have exposed.

CHAPTER IX.

CHARLES IN DEBATE.

With power thus consolidated, Fox began the new year (1756) with courage. Then came a proposition from Government to bestow the large sum of 120,000*l.* as a reward for such persons in North America as had distinguished themselves by "loyalty," and Johnson, who had avenged the death of the bluff and blundering Braddock, was to have 5000*l.* Every American subject was a *specialité* of Charles Townshend's. He opposed this plan with warmth, unless, indeed, he added significantly, this gross sum should be accounted for in detail. This was pointed at Fox, now at the rich anchorage of the Pay Office. For it will be seen, by this time, that Charles was a very

Malay in his politics, and "ran amuck" at friends and foes according to the humour of the moment. Pitt followed up in attack, and said that it was a disjointed ministry, whose only bond of union was a corrupt and arbitrary measure. Fox retorted with spirit, that if there was any disunion in the Cabinet, Pitt himself would be sure to join with the dissentients, as he had done before. Notwithstanding this smart thrust, the two talked together after the debate was over, and Fox assured Pitt that he was on excellent terms with the duke, and that, so far from that, there were two men who had actually come to the duke and offered to give up Pitt if the duke would give up Fox; but the duke had declined such a bargain. Fox had offered to name the two men, but Pitt could well guess that the two Townshends were meant. George was the intriguer; Charles was indifferent, and merely followed his brother: and so Pitt understood it. As Walpole well said, he was only eager to promote confusion. In the same month a proposal was made for levying Swiss, to be sent to America under English officers, and Charles, with a surprising

knowledge of American details, dealt very fully with the subject. He showed many instances where this mixture of forces had always failed. He was eager that the American agent, Bollan, should be heard against the proposal. He was very earnest in this, pressing the matter, and rather harassing the ministry by his anxiety for the grievances of Americans. But Fox had not forgotten the meditated Townshend treachery, and had a capital retort ready. He brought up Charles's old skirmish with Lord Egmont, and reminded the House of what had then passed between two persons—"one of whom I believe is now present." The person now here bade Lord Egmont "take the *poor American by the hand and point out his grievance; he defied him; if that would not do, he beseeched him; for his part he did not know of one.*" Then Fox added, this gentleman would attend and "*confute Mr. Bollan and his patron.*" This was admirable, for Charles's discomfiture of Lord Egmont had been signal, and was recollected by all.

For the moment he was overpowered by this thrust, and his confusion was evident to all the House. They were, indeed, his own

words when in office. But in a moment his wit and genius came to his aid. Striking his hand upon his forehead, as if a sudden inspiration had come upon him—this may have been in imitation of Pitt—he started to his feet, and defended himself. He had spoken of the *civil* department, for which he himself had been responsible. "I defend it still. On the *military* oppressions, I am ready to meet Fox and his *aide-de-camp*, Lord Egmont. Is this the proper distinction? If it be, then I say this is an unmanly attack on a young man." There were furious cries of "Order! order!" "Order?" said Townshend, facing Fox's party scornfully. "Unmanly!—is *that* out of order? Upon my word, this is the greatest sensitiveness in the troops of Xerxes *I* ever heard of!" This flash turned the tables, and put the majority out of countenance. A grain less of parts, says Walpole, and a scruple more of modesty, and he had been silenced for ever; but his self-confidence and audacity carried him through. Two days afterwards the ministry, jaded and weary with eternal baiting, took up the policy of remaining silent, when, after many attempts to make them break

silence, Charles Townshend attacked them again, "in a fine, animated, and provoking speech." He taunted the ministerial followers with obeying a leader who would not condescend to give the reasons for their policy, and in a contemptuous manner, which seems to have been a special weapon of his, bade the new placemen give some proof of *being fit for their places;* and then in his usual fashion rambled over all the motives and morality of ministerial politics with infinite wit and humour, and a delightful discursiveness. It was in these excursions that he excelled, and gave most delight to his hearers. This attack brought up Fox, who met him with good-humour and smiles, saying that his challenges were always so agreeable, it was hard to resist them. "Yet," said Fox, "though he has spoken very plainly, I do not see how his description applies to me. *I* cannot be the insolent minister, for it requires more parts than I have to support insolence." He added, too, that the majority which Charles Townshend thought proper to call "mean," he did not think mean in his heart. The discussion came to a close with old garrulous Horace

Walpole—not the letter-writer—rambling off into a story about an old woman, apologizing to the Speaker about names and dates, with the Speaker saying to him promptly, but with a familiarity that seems amazing to our notions of a Speaker—"Oh, sir, one old woman may make as free as she pleases with another!" These skirmishes are very lively and dramatic. No wonder Walpole said that Charles Townshend "lightened."

All this time he was in a tumult of noisy spirits, and seems to have been full of careless *abandon,* and reckless humour. His wife's noble relations were a little astounded at the free treatment of them. He respected them no more than he did his own. One night, when the Duchess Dowager of Argyle, his mother-in-law, was "bawling" to Lady Suffolk, who was very deaf, he openly mimicked her before the whole company, and called out in the same voice, "Large stewing oys-ters!" And some one was praising Lady Falmouth's jewels, which covered her waist, and was saying what a fine stomach it was, when he said, "My lord has a finer!"

CHAPTER X.

THE BYNG TRAGEDY.

But in the June of this year arrived news from the war, which threw the whole country into a ferment. This was the capture of Minorca by the dandy Duke of Richelieu, and the disgrace, as it was considered, of the British arms—an event, the importance of which was as absurdly depreciated by the vanquished, as it was exaggerated by the victors.* When the details arrived, then the whole fury of the nation turned itself on the admiral,

* In some of Dumas' historical romances the reader will find what capital has been made out of this victory, and how the changes are rung upon Mahon, and the surprising modesty of the "Vanqueur de Mahon." It is curious too to compare the quiet indifference with which the French accepted their many beatings, and the fury into which the English mob were thrown by one.

and required a victim, in either the minister or Byng. Then came the burnings in effigy, the caricatures, the attack on Byng's Park, and the broadsides and ballads. When the duke went down to Greenwich to see Lady Caroline Petersham, a seafaring mob found him out, pelted his carriage with mud, and bade his coachman take the road to the Tower. He heard ballads in the street, the burden of which was:

"To the block with Newcastle,
To the yard-arm with Byng!"*

A nature like his was sure to be scared by such ominous tokens, and after many intrigues and delays, he basely gave way to the cry for blood.†

Charles Townshend profited by the occasion. Panting for office, he is said to have taken advantage of this temper to establish a little weekly flying sheet, called the *Test*, of which, with characteristic fitfulness, he published but two

* There is a caricature in the Museum representing a fox sitting in a chair at council, with a pair of scales in his hand. In one scale is Pitt, Townshend, Legge, and some more; in the other, a bundle of places and pensions.

† Walpole has a shocking story of the duke's sending the duchess to the princess to canvass her *for* the execution.

numbers.* "He had too much mercury," said Walpole, "*and too little ill-nature*," to prosecute such a task. This is handsome testimony.

Nothing can be conceived more lurid and ghastly than the tone of the proceedings about the wretched culprit, now to be made a victim to save a falling ministry. The desperate efforts made in the House by Pitt to save him; the sort of game of chess that went on over his life; the special pleading; the agonizing scruples of gallant men like Keppel, who tried him; and the unworthy fears of others, like Geary, who were afraid to move in the business lest they might offend the Court, and lose naval promotion;—these things make up a strange picture. But, by the strangest fatality in the world, at this juncture the Chief Justiceship of England became vacant, and Murray, with extraordinary promptness, seized on the opportunity of escaping from Parliament.

He was not in the class of routine law officers for whom that post is, according to

* Horace Walpole says but one appeared. The price was twopence, and the publisher Hooper.

the quaint old black letter phrase, "the pillow whereon his Majesty's attorney doth lay his head." Murray was a very different type from the feeble Dudley Ryder and his brethren. He might have easily reckoned on more magnificent preferment; but the terrible eye of Pitt, and that terrible "turning round" on him in the House, those hours when he had to sit, pale and writhing with agony, while his enemy leisurely turned daggers in his heart —these had become a sort of nightmare for him. And here was this tremendous Byng complication coming up, with Pitt gathering fury and preparing fresh agonies.

Offers, almost frantic, were made to detain him. The Duchy of Lancaster for life; a pension of *six thousand* a year; a reversion for his nephew, and the privilege of keeping his place of Attorney-General. He was thus *splendidly guaranteed* against all risks of a ministerial fall, which thus proves that it was no abstract eagerness for his worldly interests that made him refuse such surpassing bribes. With such a provision, he might be independent of ministerial changes, and wait patiently for the Chancellorship and the Peerage. But

he declined these scandalous and outrageous offers and, shrinking from further parliamentary agonies, became Lord Mansfield, and Chief Justice of England.

The opportunity for escape was too tempting. He was indeed scared.* Never were such bribes, in the shape of pensions, places, promises, peerages, offered to a law officer before. He was astonished himself, and with mock humility affected to deprecate the extravagant price that was set upon his services. How he remained inflexible, and with a sort of cold selfishness persisted, and left his weak friends to face the dangers, is written in many histories. Charles Townshend came up to wish him joy: "Or rather to wish myself joy," he added, "for you will ruin the Duke of Newcastle by leaving the House of Commons, and ruin the Chancellor by going into the House of Lords."

There was a deep truth in this compliment. Wherever the strength of the Government

* In the curious "Colebrooke Diary," scraps only of which are given in Sir D. Le Marchant's edition of "Walpole's Mémoires," it is stated that Murray confessed to the Duke of Newcastle, who told Lord Coventry, that he was really intimidated by Pitt.

lay, it was not to be found in its chief financial official. The Chief Accountants of England—for they were indeed no more—were lamentably deficient, and about this time came a succession of Chancellors of the Exchequer, whose gifts would have discredited the fifth form of an ordinary school. Still the revenue with which they had to deal was of the most humble extent, not exceeding from seven to eight millions.

No greater contrast could be conceived than to turn from the modest balance-sheet of these days, and the mediocre statement of the helpless official who "moved them," to the vast figures and complete finance of about a hundred years later—to the splendid display of a masterly budget, in which are evolved, with all the treasures of rhetoric, the deepest principles of science and experience. Lyttelton and Gladstone are names representing the very poles of finance.

In January the duty fell upon Sir George Lyttelton of "opening the budget," * which was considered to be tolerably well done so

* This now familiar term I have seen alluded to then, as "*what is called* the Budget."

long as he confined himself to general statements, but when he approached the figures he grew bewildered. He floundered miserably as he got on the topic of the sinking fund; and Pitt, then coming up, played on him with sarcasm, and showed off his blunders. But this was nothing to a scene that took place a month or so later, when some new duties had to be moved on such strange objects as bricks and tiles, cards and dice, and silver plate. Those involved nice "differential" questions—on weights and measures, "drawbacks," and such matters; and the result was an exhibition of universal ignorance on the part of every one who took share in the discussion, which was all but ludicrous. It came out that hardly a member knew what was Troy Weight. The wretched chancellor floundered through the bogs and pitfalls of technical terms, confounding prices with duties, and "premiums" with other terms. Pitt and Fox, eager to expose him, themselves made only a more lamentable exposure; while Murray, defending his colleague with true national caution, forebore to touch on such dangerous topics, but quibbled handsomely on securer ground.

The chancellor gladly gave up his tax upon bricks, estimated at only 30,000*l.*, and accepted instead one on ale-houses, which brought him 70,000*l.* Not many years after came another chancellor—the most abandoned man upon town—who with candid impudence declared that posterity would distinguish him as the most incapable chancellor the empire ever had!

And yet, looking back to that financial debate, and considering that it took place a hundred and ten years ago, before "The Wealth of Nations" had been written, there were some members who displayed a knowledge of the principles of finance by no means discreditable. The discussion was at least lively. Legge urged even thus early the true principle of productive taxation; viz., reduction to produce a larger amount, a principle only lately recognised. He pointed out how, by the reduction of the duty on silk, it had risen from 800*l.* to 15,000*l.* The absurd part of this plate tax was that any amount of plate above two thousand ounces was to be untaxed; and Murray had the ignorance to plead in its defence that, by thus passing over the more magnificent sort of

plate, no discouragement would be given to the manufacture—not seeing that by such a disposition all the *substantial* owners of plate, the grand seigneurs, were allowed to escape, and the burden thrown on the less productive area of the middle classes. And yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer urged that his chief partiality to the tax arose from the poor being exempt. It was indeed a strange tax, that so cleverly contrived to exempt both rich and poor from its burden. Legge remarked that the result would be, that all plate, if sold, would be sent abroad; if broken up and coined, it would not add to the national stock. It was mere dead treasure, he said, not productive. But he surely forgot the elements of labour and design. Some one objected to it on the ground that it would teach servants to become informers; others, that it would be a mere register for the housebreakers; a third objected that it would hand over the trade to the French, or at least make them think us bankrupt; while another proposed to substitute for it a tax on the exportation of horses, for every French officer now kept two English horses. This was all surprising ignorance, but

not surprising in days when there was found a Chancellor of the Exchequer who proposed to tax meat. As for the brick tax, it was remarked, in the course of the debate, that all respectable houses, and those belonging to the wealthy through the country, were built of stone—a discovery that seemed to have flashed on the chancellor for the first time—and it was accordingly withdrawn.

But towards the end of this year, and before Byng's fate was decided, matters hurried to a crisis. Fox found it impossible to carry on. He was checked and thwarted by the insatiate duke in all things. He resigned. Pitt was sent for, who was haughty and impracticable, and made lofty demands. He met Fox on the stairs at the palace, and told him plainly that he would not serve the king with him. The king and Fox were filled with rage and bitterness at the arrogance of this master of the situation. "Indeed," wrote the Duke of Bedford to his wife, "when I come to relate to you the impracticability of *this man*, it will amaze you." He was like a cold arrogant beauty, and they had to humble themselves to him. His grand airs of indifference must have galled them.

Glancing down the lists of possible members of the new ministry, he affected to recollect Charles Townshend for the first time saying, "Here is a name we can hardly have at the bottom;" a speech that was at once carried to the ears of its subject. Indeed, he knew well of Charles's bitter impatient coquettings, and of his rides with Rigby, and some one had even told him not long before that Charles had actually proposed to desert him and join Fox. All this he knew; but nothing was more admirable than the lofty indifference with which he looked on at, and despised, what he considered these boyish vagaries on the part of Townshend. As it was, he took no notice. Charles received the office of Treasurer of the Chambers, and the old duke at last resigned.

The legacy of dealing with Byng was bequeathed to Pitt, yet he maintained the same manful bearing on the matter that he had done in Opposition. The struggle that was made to save the unfortunate officer was desperate and almost chivalrous. The men of honour and conscience in the House have never yet been done justice to; and the battle of his life and

death was contested inch by inch. But it was all unavailing, and the most sarcastic of Frenchmen had to record that the odd English found it necessary to "kill an admiral now and then to encourage the others." *

His brother George about this time invented a new sort of caricature, done on a small card, the first of which that was issued was a famous one of the duke and Fox as *Lockit* and *Peachum* in the "Beggar's Opera," looking at each other and saying, "Brother, brother! we are both of us in the wrong!" †

This was in enormous request. The brothers

* The passage in *Candide* is a picture. At Portsmouth a crowd of people lined the shore, and looked out at a stout man on his knees on the deck of a vessel, with his eyes bandaged. Four soldiers, posted in front, discharged each three shots at his head in the most leisurely way, and then all the crowd turned off quite satisfied. "What does this mean?" asked Candide. "Who was the stout man they have thus killed with such ceremony?" "The admiral," said his friend. "And why kill the admiral?" "Because he did not kill enough of others. He fought with a French admiral, and it was decided that he did not get near enough to him." "But," objected Candide, "the French admiral was as far off from the English one as the English admiral was from him." "Incontestable," answered his friend, and who then added the famous remark.

† One of these, no bigger than a small playing-card, is to be seen in the British Museum. It is very spirited. The duke's head is characteristic; and, what has not been noticed, a gallows is placed over each.

of the Townshend family held to each other very firmly; and indeed all through it is remarkable what union existed among them. Sometimes they broke out into a temporary quarrel, but were soon reconciled.

The new year (1756) began. The new minister was in a sick retirement, and suffering from his gout. The Tories remained quiet. When the ordnance estimates were brought in, Charles Townshend, following his usual extraordinary tactics, displeased because he had been "put off" with a sinecure, began to scrutinize them as if he was in Opposition. He found out some jobs about the Duke of Marlborough's pay, and a late naval review. Then, with equal petulance, when a militia bill was brought in by Conway, and on Fox saying that it should be altered to make it acceptable to the Lords, Charles burst out into a fury, and fell upon them. He then returned to the Duke of Marlborough, found out that he was giving himself ten shillings a day, and "six shillings more than the great duke had drawn," and made him refund the difference.

The temper of the House at this time was

very curious; not all Charles Townshend's fireworks could move it from its torpor. The Tories were determined not to embarrass Pitt.* Soame Jenyns, at one of Lord Halifax's dinners, delighted the company by describing the state of things as like two or three surly countrymen who walk round and round each other at a fair, and jostle a little, but each is afraid to strike first, lest the other should take the law of him.

Still this was only an artificial repose. Even the pompous Sir Thomas Robinson said that the floor of the House was covered thickly with gunpowder—to which Charles Townshend added smartly, "only covered over with thatch." It was now the January of 1757. Charles was in ill-humour, which he did not

* It is curious that *before* the ministry came in, Fox should have prescribed this tone as essential to the safety of the country. "I think peace and quiet," he wrote in 1756, "as necessary to this country, as ever a night's sleep was to a man dying with a fever." And again: "There is in this arrogant and foolish scheme, peace in the House, and, therefore, I am for it. . . . But if Pitt will have it that either he or I must be dishonest and mad, let it be him that is so, and for the sake of the public, let me assist to make his arrogance of *as little detriment to the public as possible*." He was, therefore, creditably carrying out what he had proposed. See his curious letter in the Bedford Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 211.

conceal. His haughty master ruled him despotically, and tolerated no vagaries. Against him he dared not make any exhibition: but on all others he in turn vented his humours, with a shiftiness that was almost eccentric. Then, still in ill-humour, he attacked an Alderman Baker, a member of the House, who had had a contract for furnishing the troops in America. As this was under the last administration, he, with strange indiscretion, glided into an ironical attack upon his own uncle the duke, gibing him with extraordinary severity. The alderman, however, defended himself with truth and vigour, to the simple text of "Prove it." And then Fox, though ill and looking wretched—his son Charles, the younger, was dangerously sick—came to the rescue, and attacked Townshend with good argument and spirit, showing how indecent it was, while moving for papers on which a charge was to be founded, to assume the truth of that charge, and assail a man as if he was already guilty. Townshend's friend Rigby chuckled over this repulse, and enjoyed his catching a Tartar in Alderman Baker.

This strange behaviour of Charles was quite in keeping with his spasmodic nature. For, growing impatient at his situation, he was already plotting, and had taken a long solemn ride of an hour with that arch-schemer Rigby, in which such serious matters were discussed, that Rigby would not write them to the Duke of Bedford.

Meanwhile, the Byng proceeding was going on. A desperate struggle was made in the House to save him. Pitt exerted himself, but it does not seem that he used all his power with the king, as he might have done. Fox, in the last struggle in the House before the execution, when it was proposed to release the members of the court-martial from their oaths, and declare something that was on the conscience, said he would not oppose the present Bill, as he was satisfied with the explanations. To the astonishment of all, Charles stood up and said that *he* had intended supporting Fox in opposing the Bill, but would not do so now, as he also was quite satisfied. *He* did not go upon hearsay in such matters. He also begged to congratulate the House on obtaining such assistance through the agency

of Mr. Fox. The gratuitous indiscretion of this declaration was apparent, and it brought up George Townshend, who told Charles, with much impatience, that if he had taken the trouble to attend the House at an earlier period, he would have had that assistance from other quarters. Charles appealed to the House, if the reasons had been put forward so satisfactorily as by Fox; and thus the members were entertained by this indecent altercation between two brothers. And then, with a cold eye, and the most bitter contempt, and an accent there was no mistaking, Pitt rose to say, *no man of common sense or of common integrity* could affect to make such an excuse, yet he still wished the gentleman joy of *his conscience* being made so easy. Thank God, he went on in an impassionate way, he felt more than popularity—he felt justice! He was indifferent as to who was in power, so long as their wretched country was safe; nor would he use *their wretched arts to prop up a miserable station.*

Fox, very angry at this attack, and "sneering and insulting," jumped up to reply, and said he was glad Mr. Pitt had commendations

of him from Mr. Townshend. ("I wish you joy of him!" interrupted the great minister in a *sotto voce* that could be heard by half the House.) And these praises seem to have nettled the right honourable gentleman. So the battle went on. By the rules of the House at this time, it seems members could reply to each other *ad infinitum*, and on this question Fox spoke five times.

CHAPTER XI.

CHANGES.

But now the old intrigues were beginning. The Duke of Newcastle had bought green coats and fowling-pieces, and had ostentatiously gone down to set up as a country gentleman. But a fortnight tired him, and he was up in town trying the old game. Once more were the prejudices and partialities of the king turned to the settlement of what should be the government of the country. Lord Temple had, indeed, spoken with cool insolence to the king, and Pitt he could not endure.

In April, 1757, the king boldly dismissed Temple and Pitt. How other combinations were tried ineffectually, how the people clamoured, and how, after an interval, Pitt was called back

triumphant and absolute, with the irrepressible old Duke of Newcastle, now not far off seventy, more as a useful assistant and political "hodman" for all those dirty offices of patronage in which he delighted, rather than as a limitation or check upon his power—is well known, and need not be lingered over here. Even in those transactions the old duke showed his craft, and "jockeyed" Lord Halifax, who went down to the country storming about his "villany."

During the shifting of places the two Townshends, George and Charles, presented themselves at Pitt's house. They had not been thought of. Pitt asked George, could he do anything for him (of course in a small way)?—an offer declined with ill-humour. Then he turned to Charles and asked, would he like to take his non-political office of Treasurer again? Charles answered sulkily, that he had not resigned it as yet, and did not intend doing so; that he did not mean to go to Court on Monday with the new government, but should go down to the country—into Norfolk—with his brother. They both then quitted Pitt in unconcealed ill-humour.

Charles was indignant at being treated like a cipher.

But he was soon in town again, acting as manager on a motion of inquiry into the conduct of Fox and the late ministry, which under such management came to nothing. He and Lord Egmont had another indecent wrangle. Pitt, when the inquiry came on, got up from his gouty chair and came down to the House to act, and over-act, that always favourite part of his—the sick man, racked with pain, coming at the call of his unfortunate country. It was a broiling day, but he was wrapped up in an old beaver coat and waistcoat and a scarlet roquelaure lined with fur, with his gouty arm out of the sleeve and hung in a crape sling. Over his legs were drawn huge stockings. But it was noticed that, in his excitement of speaking, he forgot the ostentatious debility of his helpless arm, and at glowing passages it was withdrawn from the sling and flourished with all the ease of the sound one. The inquiry was indeed a farce, and is a comment on what was the trustworthy character of "a return" in those times. The officers who were to furnish the papers did

just as they pleased. They could abridge or suppress; and out of delicacy to persons who might be compromised, all proper names were suppressed. It was not printed, and furnished to each member, with the happy convenience of our own day. The dates alone filled three and seventy sheets, and the "returns" themselves were overloaded with masses of useless letters and papers that no one would wade through. All these documents were in MS., and the system was, that they should be read aloud to the House—a weary operation, that soon thinned the House.

But this new shuffle of place had not been effected without a new shameful distribution of public money. Pensions of 3000*l.* a year each were given to Lord Dorset and Cholmondeley; 1200*l.* to Tennison; and, as a new refinement on this corruption, Henley had actually to be bribed to accept his pension of 1500*l.* a year. He had made it a condition that his son should have the reversion of a Tellership of the Exchequer, with 1500*l.* a year also *en attendant*. There was, besides, a secret distribution. The only discontented ones were the two Townshends, George and

Charles, whom Pitt affected not to think it worth his while to conciliate. But the overpowering Scotch tone of this ministry was already conspicuous, and the jest was going round that the king was using Newcastle coal, Pitt coal, and Scotch coal. The last was the favourite. If we might refine on this humble metaphor, it might be added that the Newcastle was a smoky ashy fuel, adulterated with stones and slates; the Scotch a cold selfish material, that gave out little heat; but the Pitt made a pure steady fire, that glowed brilliantly and warmed the largest hall. Notwithstanding these advantages, it was plain which the king preferred, and very soon the Scotch coal was the only fuel used in the royal grates.

By his marriage with Lady Dalkeith, Charles had become a sort of guardian to the young Duke of Buccleuch, and the Scotch remarked with some bitterness, that he tried to keep his charge away as much as possible from his estates and native country. This was indeed quite natural, as he wished to keep his ward from acquiring the narrow selfishness of Scotch patriotism, which was then so seriously inter-

fering with the counsels of the nation. Charles, too, from early recollections of Leyden, had reason to have no pleasant associations connected with Scotchmen.

An instance very illustrative of Charles's character and of his "soreness" happened when Home, then in prodigious favour with Lord Bute, came to call on Mr. Townshend.* With him came two of the old Leyden college friends, but though Charles received them with great warmth and kindness, he never affected to have met them before. But one of them was the Doctor Carlyle, whom he had consulted so earnestly about the disagreeable adventure with Johnstone.

The young duke, then a schoolboy, was turning over a book in a corner. "Come here," said Charles, gaily; "we know what you are at; show the gentlemen what you have got there." He coloured up, and they found it was a school-book that had been dedicated to him. Charles was gay and merry over this; but though he wished to forget Leyden,

* There was a dreadful play called "Ægis," written by Home, which the public would not be got to go and see. The Prince of Wales, at Lord Bute's prompting, went three times.

he was good-natured enough to make them dine with him and his countess. This young duke growing up, and only a day or two after Townshend's death, was heard to congratulate himself on that death, as it freed him from a sort of thraldom which had prevented his coming to a better knowledge of his countrymen.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISIT TO SCOTLAND.

A LITTLE later Charles Townshend, finding nothing "turning up" in politics, thought it a good opportunity to go down in a sort of state, and visit his ward's estates. With Lady Dalkeith and her daughter he went to Scotland, and came to stop at Dalkeith. Here we see him among the Scotsmen in his most characteristic mood; and indeed, as we see him everywhere, most genuine and natural. This might be a mere *villegiatura*; but even an obscure ferment of Edinburgh politics had a charm for him. There was likely to be a vacancy in the representation of that city, and Charles, idle, and with no subject for his lively mind to work, seized on

the idea of being the member. He made no account of the difficulties; that the Duke of Argyll had the disposal of the seat, or that Lord Milton had to be won over, or that there was a daring Irish barrister, one Forrester, already in the field, and backed up by Baron Maule, one of the judges. It was enough that here was a scheme or an intrigue, and as Charles was to stay two months, he flung himself into it at once. The Dalkeith chaplain often told how he had discussed the matter with the gay, lively Englishman; how he had enforced on him the necessity of conciliating the great Scotch duke. But this Charles disdained, and preferred dealing with Lord Milton, whom he had set himself to bewitch, and succeeded perfectly. The chaplain pressed the matter with some ardour, but Townshend, whose impetuosity could not brook even argument, burst into a rage, and said that the minister was too crusty to have any opinion but his own, and always made it a point of opposing him in everything. When Dr. Carlyle took his hat on this treatment, Charles calmed down in a second, and quietly asked for some reasons.

Indeed, even this short Edinburgh career, trifling as it is, shows him overflowing with the same brilliancy and restless vivacity. When the Scotch burgesses gave him a dinner and presented him with their freedom —a compliment with which they were fond of encumbering every stranger—he made one of his wonderful speeches. Though, by this time, he had discovered that he had no chance of the city, he determined to have the satisfaction of destroying a rival, and fell upon the Irish counsellor, Forrester, with all his favourite wit and sarcasm. He gibbeted the counsellor, and did him such damage as effectually disposed of his claims. But Charles's wit, or the claret he had drunk, carried him away. He had the imprudence to make the old king, then at the edge of his grave, the next topic for his mirth, and he treated him and his court with infinite pleasantry. This the solemn burgesses could not follow; as well might he have been merry with the Bible. The Scotch faces round the board were shocked. That indiscretion effectually disposed of his claims. No doubt, when he got home, he ridiculed, in his boisterous way,

the absurd aldermen of Auld Reekie, and mimicked their horrified countenances.

In a better sort of society he became at home, almost at once. For one night he was made a member of the Select Society, that debating club whose merits seemed to have been a little unduly exaggerated by Scotchmen; and there he flashed and sparkled in his own manner. But Lord Elibank and Dr. Dick were "put up" to answer the Englishman, no doubt with the "preceeseness" that the subject required; and it was agreed by the company that the local gentlemen were altogether beyond the Englishman in argument and effect. He was voted to be a mere "flash in the pan." On another occasion he went into Edinburgh to dine at a tavern with some clever Scotch wits, Home and Ferguson and others. They sat down at two, and the Scotch gentlemen aired their gifts for him, which had only the effect of boring him, for he scarcely spoke. After nearly an hour's silence, he suddenly burst out with a torrent of bright talk—sparkling, overwhelming, and extorting admiration from them all. No doubt he had grown impatient at the solemn platitudes he had been condemned to

listen to; but the Scotch gentlemen, while giving him credit for eloquence and fine language, insisted that he had only reclothed their own ideas.

On another day he came to a school-dinner at Musselburgh, where he sat down with the magistrates and local authorities. Immense pains had been taken with the banquet, to impress the English visitor; and, says the gentleman who was present, "a brilliant company of men of letters" had been brought together to meet him. Of this "brilliant company" the only respectable name was Robertson. The rest were Home, Ferguson, and Wilkie, the turgid epic poem writer, whom his countrymen believed to have Milton's mantle on his shoulders. The venison was a failure, which an English Colonel Pratt took much to heart, saying it was the only haunch he had met with in Scotland, and almost wept over the misfortune. But though the company laughed, there were very rough, rude elements among them; a noisy, coarse raillery then obtaining a good deal both in Ireland and Scotland, and being considered the height of convivial pleasantry.

The colonel went on to complain disrespectfully of the St. Andrew's university, which had sent him as "awkward a beast" for a recruit as had ever put on a red coat. The successor to Milton blazed up with fury at this slight; and his countryman, who was present, and admits that he was "a great master of horseplay raillery," describes how he silenced the colonel. This was effected, he says, "with witty and successful tartness," which seems too gentle a phrase. It led on to a general brawl, stimulated by nationality and abundant claret. In the dispute between the colonel and Wilkie, Charles interposed, meaning to say something for Wilkie; but his aim was mistaken, and he was assailed with the coarse "horseplay raillery" of which the other was such a master. The local Scotchmen long boasted that their countryman had completely silenced the Englishman. But Townshend, on the first stroke of this personality, had whispered to his neighbour that he did not mean to contest for superiority in *that* line.

The whole is indeed most characteristic and amusing from sheer contrast. His was not a nature that the Scotch could appreciate. He

never visited Ireland; and he would have been far more at home at Dublin Castle, with Rigby and the Irish gentlemen, and Mr. Foote.

With all his flash and brilliancy—which were "entertaining qualities," and only suited "for summer wear"—he had good domestic gifts. The widow of quality brought with her a little daughter, Lady Mary Scott, some six or seven years old; and to her Charles was always specially fond and affectionate. He spent hours teaching her childish politics; and long after, when grown up, she looked back fondly to the memory of that kind and brilliant stepfather. Indeed, it is worthy of remark that all the leading statesmen of this time, *acharnés* as they were for politics, and supposed to have no bowels but for ministries and parties, were warm and fond in their domestic life. Pitt was notorious as a doting husband and a kind anxious uncle; and Fox, in the most critical political dangers, fretted himself miserably for the health of his son—that more famous Charles the Second. The Duke of Newcastle, indeed, had no devotion for anything human, having long since bound him-

self to the Juggernaut of an old and selfish Whiggism..

Presently came more intrigues. Lord Temple was dismissed, and the ministry broken up. They were forced to resign; and Charles Townshend was said to have shown his "shiftiness" in the manner of his resignation, in which he contrived to appear to resign with Pitt, but not on account of Pitt. He could not make up his mind for three weeks. But the fact was, this irresolution attended him in every step of his life; and in days of such utter political heartlessness it is hard to fasten on his case as a notorious instance.

After weeks of intrigue and more indecision, a ministry had to be fashioned out of such effete materials as the Duke of Newcastle and Legge. It also comprised Pitt and Fox; but there was no room found in it for Charles Townshend. He was furious at this slight.

He had laboured industriously, and his character in this light presents one of the most curious combinations—there appearing to be, as in the instance of Sheridan, a sort of hostility between such elements of human character as mere industry and excessive bril-

liancy. Townshend did not spare himself. A good story was told of this characteristic industry. His brother George and some young men were supping at the King's Arms Tavern, and some one started the theory that a national debt was a benefit. "I am sure it is not," said George, "and I can't show why; but my brother Charles can, and we will send to him for arguments." Charles was at another tavern, immediately called for pens and paper, sat down, and covered four pages closely with "arguments," and sent word that when his company was gone he would come himself and supply them with more, which he actually did. This is not in keeping with Walpole's bright photographs of him about this time—even when single-speech Hamilton was "shining" also; "that nothing is luminous compared with Charles Townshend—he drops down dead in a fit, rises in a resurrection, thunders in the Capitol, confounds the Treasury Bench, laughs at his own party, is laid up the next day, and overwhelms the duchess and the good women that go to nurse him."

And yet, strange to say, looking behind the

scenes—behind this thundering in the Capitol and confounding of ministers—we find him a laborious plodder, and carefully preparing all this thunder and lightning with infinite labour. A clerk who had been with the family let Mr. Malone into the workshop, where the fireworks were got ready. He said Charles Townshend's habit was to dictate his speeches to him for hours, on one side of the question,—then go out, talk over the matter with people of different views and opposite opinions, and then dictate a fresh speech. In this way he exhausted the subject. When the time for him to speak came, he never spoke what he had so carefully prepared; but passages which had been studied insensibly suggested themselves, and were presented in a new and more spirited setting. He had, therefore, all the security of preparation without its constraint and formality, and this seems to be the best shape of eloquence—far better than the loose carelessness of extempore speaking, and the artificial monotony of what had been got ready beforehand. It will be seen later that, on the famous occasion of what was called "the Champagne Speech," there were

people who suspected the spontaneous character of that strange performance.

Pitt was now in power, and was gaining the astonishing influence and popularity, of which his famous title, "the Great Commoner," was to be only one of the fruits. Charles Townshend was in the cold shade of opposition, "lightening as usual. When it was proposed to increase the judges' salaries, and the motion was carried by 169 to 39, a jest of his went round the House that "the Book of Judges had been saved by the Book of Numbers." Another saying of his went round also, *apropos* of a peer who had asked for Lord Carlisle's garter. "He should have begun lower," said Charles, "and have asked first for my Lady Carlisle's garter."

But now a yet greater influence—what it became the fashion to hint at darkly as a "power behind the throne"—began to disturb the already disordered balance of political party. The needy but fortunate Scotch nobleman who had succeeded in fascinating both the prince and his mother was now to exercise an important influence, which suggested to the scandalous the days of Mortimer. We can almost

trace a portrait of this fortunate Scotsman, with his tall bony figure—his legs, in which he took special pride—and his cold manners. Before his rise, he was often seen taking solitary walks by the Thames, looking down pensively at these limbs, and abstractedly gathering plants. It was known that in his own family he was cold, moody, and inaccessible, even to his own children. It was a fortunate day when his apothecary took him in his carriage to Egham races, where a tent was pitched for the Prince of Wales, and where, towards evening, a fourth was wanting to make up a whist party. The Scotch earl was brought in, and stayed so late, that the apothecary and his carriage were gone, and the prince insisted on carrying him home to Cliefden. He was a histrionic nobleman, and exhibited the handsome leg both there and at Leicester House—in theatricals organised by the Duchess of Queensberry. And it was maliciously recollected afterwards that he had played Lothario on that amateur stage—a part which he later represented on the larger boards of Court. It was odd that he should have been a patron of Doctor Hill

and Murphy, besides a whole gang of Scotch and Irish hack writers, who were hired to defend him as if they were bullies, and used bludgeons instead of pens. He was the most fortunate favourite of modern times at the English Court, and his visits even to Carlton House were made with a sort of Eastern mystery, quite in keeping, and that might well excite suspicion. It was known that he used on these occasions the chair and chairmen of Miss Vansittart, and the curtains were always close drawn.

Even to his own countrymen he was cold and repelling, at least in his official attitude, and we have a sketch of him in Doctor Carlyle's entertaining memoirs, receiving Scotch gentlemen, booted and standing, and with an insolent roughness. No one was ever so cordially detested by the country, and it is a curious instance of that linking past eras to our own that the late Mr. Rogers remembered him skulking from the mob, wrapped up in a cloak, and with a slouched hat pulled down over his brows. Here is a "Bute Ballad," which is about the gentlest of any published against him :

"With manners unformed and with language uncouth,
The rude north he deserted to polish the south.
His lov'd bagpipes he left and began on his flute,
And a princess soon yielded to John, Earl of Bute.
Derry down.

"Not melodious his note, nor his voice sweet and clear,
And rather offended her fine delicate ear;
But his full proper stops pleased, though he stood mute,
And the dear melting thrills of this John, Earl of Bute.
Derry down.

"The garter he wins, like his countryman, Chartres,
All England to hang him would part with both garters;
And, good Lord, how the people would laugh and would hoot,
Could they once set a swinging this John, Earl of Bute.
Derry down."

According to the rude jests of the day—a jest that never failed to convulse the mob—this would have been said to have been "Butefully written;" for that joke was tortured into a thousand shapes, and never failed to give delight.

It also hailed caricatures. One of these is still preserved—a picture of a cabinet council—which is not without point and spirit. It is called The Royal Nursery. The old duke is seen rocking the cradle, dressed as a nurse. Bute, in a tartan, is carrying a Fox on his shoulders; and Charles Townshend is seen walking about with a weathercock stuck in

his hat, and a "whirligig," or top, spinning in his hand. This uncomplimentary portrait is accompanied by verses not less uncomplimentary:

"There behold young Charley grinning,
With his whirligig a spinning,
Laugh like me that's sure of winning.
Doodle, doodle, doo."

The old king had died and the new reign had begun in 1760. Some one told Charles that Miss Chudleigh — the same who had fainted so outrageously when the actor fell down—had cried on hearing the news of the king's death. "What, oysters?" he said, in his impetuous way.

This, however, was but an unprofitable occupation. Pitt seemed stronger than minister ever was, and his situation, as Macaulay says, "the most enviable ever occupied by any public man in English history." The great City of London, the merchants of wealth and trade, and all the large interests, held to him firmly; and the tone of the public mind towards him was very much of the class and quality of the public towards a late first minister. He was proclaimed the great

English premier—a cry sure always to rally the nation.

But in reality he was falling fast. The influence of a favourite behind the throne was undermining him. He finally fell, weakly accepting the fatal pension and peerage for his wife, and Bute succeeded, with Grenville leading in the other House.

The broader outline of the downward course of this ministry is very familiar: the Scotch nobleman's interest steadily increased, and the king was heard to say that he meant to get rid of "those scoundrels"—meaning his ministers. The old duke was gradually reduced to a state of political helplessness almost pitiable. One morning, at his house at Lincoln's Inn Fields, he whined out all his griefs to Rigby, of all people in the world: that the Whigs were being given up everywhere—a thing he would and could not submit to. In confidence he had been told they were to vote as they pleased; but had not private instructions been sent that they were to support only a Scotchman? So with the turning out of a Whig Lord Lieutenant. Then, when he complained, they told him that

this was the king's order—which, of course, was a sufficient and proper answer; but he might be allowed to remonstrate with Lord Bute. Again, did not that lord make appointments for that purpose—and never keep them? He was willing to remain at Court, but would not be a cipher, &c.

This was pitiable. He was almost alone and helpless in the ministry. He was at last hustled out of office, and the Scotch nobleman remained sole minister.

With all these changes, and the battles through which these changes had been brought about, it would be difficult to distinguish these successive shiftings one from the other by any broad lines. They were the colours of a political rainbow; from Pelham and Newcastle it had glided into Fox and Newcastle, which, by an invisible gradation, had become Fox, Pitt, and Newcastle; then Pitt alone in one bold, broad colour, and Fox once more, and Bute, with the decent drab tone of the Grenvilles. Were these eternal changes worth all the heat and dust of the conflict, or even the costly, laborious machinery of a House of Commons? It was the mere vulgar question,

not of party or principle, but of office or no office, or rather of the place and pension that was the legacy of office. No wonder that it was nearly impossible in the present state of things for a first minister to consider any interest of the country, having to give up every hour to the mere mechanical management of the House.

Now, therefore, was the kingdom turned into a happy pasture for the Scots. The high road that led to London was not merely the "loveliest prospect in Scotland," but it was crowded with ardent sons of the country, pushing forward to a Court where they were sure to be provided for. The country looked on indignantly but helpless at this new shape of pillage, but could mutter and growl and vent its rage in sarcastic songs and verses—libels the Scotch party called them.*

* One was a description of an exercise set to the students of Marischal College, Aberdeen, on the text "*Malis moribus* IMBUTA," which, "to make it as difficult as possible to the poor students," was to be written in English. They proposed new definitions for words, as, instead of "resigning" or "succeeding to office," one should say he has been Buted or im-Buted into office. There were advertisements of the same kind of Lord Hertford's Bible (he had taken a Scotch secretary, Hume), *Butefully* bound. The theme was endlessly varied.

No wonder such personality as the following found its way into the journals:

> "Lord Bute, his ambition and wisdom to show,
> Resigned the green ribbon and put on the blue,
> To two strings already the peer's been preferred,
> Odd numbers are lucky—*pray give him a third.*"

Now came Charles Townshend's opportunity. The Scotch premier was cousin to his wife, the Countess of Dalkeith. Where Scotch interests were paramount, the husband of a Scotch lady of rank, and the guardian of the young Duke of Buccleuch, was not likely to be passed by. At last he was no longer to be put off with a comfortable sinecure, but became a minister—Secretary at War—and the Right Honourable Charles Townshend. The solemn Grenville, whom nobody had supposed to have higher qualifications than the "red tape" ones of directing a board or an office, became leader of the House of Commons. Men might well wonder what sort of a mosaic this was, or what name to give it; for mixed up with these odd elements—Scotch and Tory like Bute, "advanced Liberal" like Townshend, advanced Conservative like Pitt, with the meaner politics which meant place, and

place only—was the effete Whiggery of the Duke of Newcastle, peculiar to himself—the species which was the genus—like one of the old coats of the period, faded, broad-flapped, snuffy, but of rich and comfortable materials.

Sterne had now come up to London from Sutton, an obscure Yorkshire village, and had in the first flush of his celebrity received attention enough to turn his head. The town was running after him. Dining everywhere with lords and bishops and wits, he had met Charles Townshend, and at this political change seemed to have caught all the excitement of the moment. This introduction he must have owed to Garrick, who knew Townshend well. Sterne seems to have written down to his country all the political gossip of the hour. "We shall soon be Butes and anti-Butes," he says, "which may answer quite as well as Tory and Whig." And this was really a happy political criticism. He knew Mr. Townshend so well that he would ask him about the interest of a country friend's son in the army, though on second thoughts it might be better to sound a "Mr. V——,"

who was a sort of "right-hand man to the Secretary." This "Mr. V——" we can have no doubt was Varey, one of the wild set, that included "Gilly" Williams, Lord Marsh, Selwyn, and Lord Coventry, and was just the sort of jovial official that would be "right-hand man" to Charles, or a pleasant acquaintance of Sterne's. He is so pleased that he says to his country friend—"Give me joy, for my friend Mr. C. Townshend will now be Secretary," and is full of shrugs and speculations and meaning whispers.

The old duke down at Claremont, miserable, and in an agony at the changes going on, in which he could take no part, could only speculate, and maunder and bewail the state of things. He found comfort in writing to Pitt, and auguring the worst. "What my nephew, Charles Townshend, will do," he said, "I cannot pretend to say, but I hardly think he will take office with George Grenville." The duke, it has been seen, was wholly astray here. "The whole system appears to me so weak and so absurd, there *is no reasoning upon it. Everybody here laughs at it.*" Poor duke! To him all systems were absurd that left *him* out.

He was sunk very low at present. He was seen one night at a ball at Bedford House. A more piteous spectacle of effete and abject scheming could not be conceived. No one noticed—no one spoke to the hoary old intriguer. He crept and crawled about the room, sidling up to this great man and that, who all affected not to see him. Now he peeped into the hazard room; and under pretext of seeing the play, wriggled up to the Duke of Bedford, and to the more august Duke of Cumberland. One slipped away from him, the other did not speak to him. The worst mortification was to see Selwyn and Walpole watching and laughing, and whispering, loud enough for him to hear, "Lord! how broken he is!" This was degrading enough: yet the old duke was to come to the surface again.

It is plain, by what happened later, that Charles joined with reluctance. He was, of course, dazzled, as he always was, by brilliant offers, but he had no affection for his new company; he had a contempt for the old duke, a dislike to the cold official pedantry of Grenville, who had for him the contempt which

the man of business always has for the uncertain unsteady man of brilliancy. To his relation, Bute, he was openly contemptuous. When that nobleman was speaking in the slow, solemn, pedantic fashion which was habitual with him, Charles would call out, in something more than a loud whisper, "Mi-nute guns! mi-nute guns!" It was said, too, that his ambition, which was boundless, and his vanity, which was on a level with his ambition, had reckoned on the lead in the House, and to be put aside for a "red tape" official, with not half his parts, hurt him.

As was to be expected, the new Secretary vented his disappointment, quite regardless of the decencies of office, and when the address was brought forward at a private meeting, his voice was heard in angry protest—dissatisfied because there was no allusion to the militia. Grenville calmly explained the reason; and the very next night Townshend went to him, begged pardon, and said he was infatuated; hoped Grenville would not take it to himself. Grenville replied, haughtily, that as far as he was concerned, he did not mind; but, as the king's servant, he could not forget it.

Then came on debates on the subsidies to German troops—an old battle ground—when Mr. Townshend brought in his estimates, with not a little of the vanity of place. He spoke of himself as "a trustee for the honest claims of the officers." Later he moved for nearly a million to defray the cost of foreign troops in English pay, and argued very ingeniously in defence of the system; taking up Pitt's favourite policy of a vast, costly, and comprehensive war, as being always the shortest, cheapest, and most effectual in the end. He then praised what he called "*Mr. Pitt's divine plan*," and its success, but said that even greater fame would attend those who should take up a plan and bring about a lasting peace. But this compliment did not bring him much—Pitt received it coolly —and in return he received no higher one than that the statement had been a "clear" one. Pitt himself was presently attacked, in true bravo fashion, by Colonel Barré, with gross personality and outrageous language. After "the ruffian," as Walpole calls him, had done, and the debate was over, some one asked Townshend when Parliament

would rise. He answered, "I don't know; but when it does, the roads will be as dangerous as if the army were disbanded." Almost immediately he saw a member offer Barré a biscuit, and he burst out with, "Oh, you should feed him on raw flesh!"

By all these marks and tokens, it was plain that he saw Pitt was the coming power, and that he was determined to conciliate him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FAVOURITE.

How the favourite gradually came to be the minister, and even sole minister; how he imperiously thrust Grenville into a minor office, and made the king announce that he *would* be a king, and dismiss Lords of the Bedchamber and Grooms of the Stole wholesale, to strike terror into others—these strange politics of the time are well known to every historical reader. The favourite, in fact, treated the officials like pawns, and set them down where he pleased on the board. But Charles Townshend was the piece that caused him most trouble. He was growing more and more discontented. Bute wanted to make him a Lord of Trade, and take away his

present post; and he is said to have hesitated very long. It is very remarkable that, with all the shiftiness and hesitation which has been laid to his charge, he, in nearly all instances, ended in taking the more honourable and least profitable course. It looked like the hesitation, not of corruption, but of ignorance. But he did not leave without exploding a rocket or two among the enemy. They told him that the king complained of being kept a prisoner by the Duke of Devonshire. "He is a prisoner, certainly," said Charles, "but mistakes his gaoler;" alluding to Bute. No better description was ever given of a "patched up" government than his remark: "It was a pretty lutestring administration, and would do very well for summer wear!" He himself, at the time, belonged to the lutestring administration! The only wonder is how he received common toleration, as nothing could be conceived more galling to a ministry than one of their body affecting to disclaim all connection with them, and amusing friends and the world with bitter epigrams at their expense. At last he resigned.

But the preliminaries of the French Peace were now coming on to be debated—one of those fatal and dangerous rocks on which the minister was supposed to be hurrying. Even then the free tongue of the Secretary at War was merry on the person of the Duke de Nivernois, who came as a sort of ambassador, but was mean in figure. He said the French had sent over the "preliminaries of a man" to arrange the preliminaries of a peace.

Everything was done to try and tide over the coming danger. Charles Townshend, out of office and a dangerous free-lance, was sent for by Lord Bute, and offered the post of Secretary of Plantations and Board of Trade, but he openly declined. He was three times closeted with the king, and, writes a correspondent of Lord Chatham, "said things that did not a little alarm." He was explicit to his Majesty; but, perhaps, suspecting the instability of the arrangement, was not to be bought over.

This was a trying question, and would test the principles of members. Pitt made one of his orations, with all the dramatic accompaniments of ostentatious illness, cordials, and

faintness of voice and manner. But he declined to divide the House, and went home amid the shouts of the mob. Charles Townshend, as usual, in a strange state of indecision, was now inclined to support the ministry, and was mortally afraid of Pitt. His fears had prevailed: and he had made up his mind to oppose the peace; then, immensely relieved by Pitt's course, he burst out into a defence of the peace—spoke for prerogative—sang a strain of ardent loyalty, and perfect hosannahs in praise of the king.

This strange being was in one of his eddies of indecision. He had resigned because he thought Pitt too strong, and the Opposition too strong. No sooner had he resigned than he found that the Opposition was contemptible, and that Pitt had kept aloof from them. He was not easy until he got back again.

It has already been hinted to what influences the Court owed this approbation of the treaty on the part of members of the House of Commons. But rumour went even beyond this, and it was stated, almost in set terms, that the favourite, Bute, and the

Princess Dowager, had been secured by French gold. As a presumption of this treachery the extravagant outlay of the favourite, a man of moderate means, was pointed to; and the corruption at home, the rank air in which the politicians were living, makes it only too probable. Insinuations coming from such a quarter as "Anti-Sejanus," the hired bludgeon man of Lord Sandwich, are not entitled to much weight; but some facts make the case suspicious. Lord Bute, at the date of his rise, was known to be a "needy Scotch thane," and his estate was calculated at 7000*l.* a year, of which 2000*l.* was settled on his brother. When he was established as the king's favourite, and just after the peace was brought about, it was found that he had purchased an estate for 97,000*l.*, that he had laid out a park, that he was building a sumptuous mansion in Berkeley Square, and another on his property. These facts might certainly excite inquiry.* The open accusations of the

* About the date of the peace the Secret Service money had increased ominously. Here is a return:—

From Oct. 1760 to Oct. 1761—

To John Earl of Bute, for his Majesty's Privy Purse .. £40,000
For Secret Service 66,000

North Briton, which charged the Duke of Bedford, who was then at Paris, with taking French gold, are, of course, not to be accepted for much; but a Doctor Musgrave —who was physician at Paris, and practised a good deal among both English and French —boldly made this charge at Paris, in the very year of the peace—a charge which seems to have been pretty current at Paris. But there was a double corruption going on. The ambassador who came over—that dwindled duke on whose figure Charles Townshend had been so merry—calling it "the preliminary of a man"—was known to receive enormous remittances from his government, which he would never have cashed in bank bills, for fear of their being traced. He was known to have paid away 30,000*l.* in a single half year. He even kept an open table for the London tradesmen, to win citizen appro-

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From Oct. 1761 to Oct. 1762—

To John Earl of Bute, for his Majesty's Privy Purse ..	£48,000
For Secret Service	72,000

From Oct. 1763 to Oct. 1764—

To John Earl of Bute, for his Majesty's Privy Purse ..	48,000
For Secret Service	72,000

bation for his peace. But there was to be yet a more public degradation. The offices of Count Virri, the Sardinian minister, had to be used in the progress of the negotiations. Among the pensions in Ireland was one for 1000*l.* a year to one George Charles, which was afterwards discovered to be an *alias* for this foreign nobleman.*

Thus the French had to secure the ministry, but the ministry had then to secure the House. It is conceded now that Fox went almost openly to work—turning his Pay Office into a sort of sale shop, where he made trade bargains with the members. In one single morning, as Martin, the secretary, owned later, as much as 25,000*l.* had been paid away, and in a fortnight a handsome majority had been bought up. Reading over the tremendous verses of Churchill, in the *Duellist*, one can now understand their dreadful fury, and the sense of abasement in every true Englishman's heart as he felt that his honour was being thus trafficked away.

* This was openly complained of in the Irish House by Mr. Perry, who naively dwelt rather on the hardship of the suppression of the real name than on the grievance itself. On the other hand, the Irish were, perhaps, too well accustomed to such gross jobs.

In February, however, of the next year (1763), perceiving that the ministry was made up out of more durable material than lutestring, or perhaps repentant, as he always was, of any of his acts, as soon as they were done, he gave in, and accepted the Department of Trade, with the mere decoration as it were of Cabinet Councillor, but without leave to go to the king. He was said to have given out that enormous offers were made to him. Bute's cohort of hack writers were now so industrious that they provoked opposition; and it is said that a quasi-Scotch paper, called *The Briton*, was the immediate cause of the famous *North Briton* coming into life. It also produced a curious club called "The Flag," composed of the first Liberal men of the day, and whose existence has not yet been suspected. It included such names as Newcastle, Bolton, Grafton, Rockingham, Dover, Albemarle, Pitt, Yorke, and Townshend. They dined at each other's houses, and the first dinner was at Lord Temple's, in Pall Mall.* As a sort

* See that curious repertory of political gossip—and perhaps scandal—"Almon's Anecdotes." For hearing the secrets of the day, and what should not be told, there are no three better books than Wraxall, Almon, and the Pitt Anecdotes.

of pastime, he took up the state of madhouses through the country, and worked it thoroughly, distinguished himself, then suddenly let it drop. He even found time to go to the installation at Cambridge, and picked up literary news. It was he who gave out that Lady Mary Montagu had left some twenty-one volumes of Diary. This number shrank to four, which confirmed Walpole in a resolution never again to believe or repeat what he told him.

In April came the astonishing news of the favourite's resignation, the secret of which has mystified all political speculators from that day to the present. It brought about another shuffle of the ministerial pack. Grenville was Premier; and the wonderful Charles, who Walpole said had more *sal volatile* in him than the whole nation put together, leaped on the stage a Lord of the Admiralty, "after his usual fluctuations." But every motion in the life of this brilliant being was to be marked with some eccentricity. No wonder Walpole cried out with amazement at his doings, that if a good fairy was to offer a son of his all sorts of gifts, he would say, "Pray, Goody,

give him anything but parts." For the new lord set off to St. James's to kiss hands for the office, bringing with him a certain Mr. Burrell, one of his creatures, whom he had of his own motion created another lord. This was objected to on the spot; and he, thinking his honour engaged, positively refused to kiss hands unless his creature was allowed to do so also. This was decidedly refused, and he was at once dismissed. There is something very genuine, and even honest, in all these extravagances. No "shifty" person would behave so directly against his own interest.

He was now free once more. He must have been down at Stowe with Lord Temple; for Wilkes, writing to that nobleman, says, "It must be now a galaxy of virtue, but I do not hold Mr. Charles Townshend a fixed star, though he is a very bright one." In London, he and Lady Dalkeith lived in Grosvenor Square, where at his own table he sometimes made her blush before the servants; this, too, in an age when blushing was but little known. To Grosvenor Square the Government spies, who were dogging Wilkes night and day, reported they had followed the great demagogue.

Lord Egremont, one of the ministers, after declaring that he looked forward to three more turtle dinners, died suddenly at breakfast; and the spectacle of Mr. Pitt's chair seen going through the park to Buckingham House caused fresh excitement. For Lord Bute, who had resigned so mysteriously, was now as mysteriously intriguing to get back to his post. The Scotch favourite was still in town—still saw the king; and the new Premier found himself checked and thwarted by an influence he could not encounter—and was obliged to put severe conditions on the king. The latter was daily writhing under this restraint, and determined to escape. But the plan was contrived with great secrecy, and like a conspiracy. Bute contrived an interview with Pitt, and asked his advice and his opinion; the other, after hanging back a little, gave it with all his animation and severe candour, and at his usual length. Bute listened amazed, but calmly; and then said, why not set all this before the king? Then Pitt thundered at him. "Can I, my lord, presume to go to the king, who am not of his council, nor in his service?" Then came a message from

the king himself, and, thus humbly solicited, this wonderful man had another triumph from his policy of indifference. He spoke to the king as plainly. The Government was in a desperate way. It would take years to restore it, and that could be done only by sharp and almost violent measures. But what was he?—a poor, infirm man, in miserable health—old, and with no strength. If his Majesty chose to use such a blunt knife, he must not blunt the edge further. This was his first interview, and the king, being alarmed, seemed to come into everything. Pitt wrote to the great country noblemen, determined to make a sort of constitutional party, and not being superior to using meaner agencies for what he considered a great good, sent to Claremont, to the old duke. That message must have indeed brought joy. He wrote in a transport to thank Pitt for "his great goodness and confidence." He will do anything. He will do everything. He will be in town to wait on him and receive his commands.

He gave eager and crafty hints that Pitt should see Hardwicke in *private*. He hoped everything had gone off to Pitt's satisfaction

in his visit to the king that morning. Alas! already as he wrote all was over. Things had gone anyway but well that morning. Pitt, full of the responsibility of the situation, had been plain-spoken, lofty, and almost arrogant. He spoke like a dictator. There was no time for varnishing things over. All who voted for the peace—all Tories *must* be turned out; the ground must be cleared. The king answered resentfully, and with some scorn. "I protest, Mr. Pitt, I do not understand you!" Then Pitt in a speculative way said he supposed Charles Townshend should be Secretary of State, and lead the House. The king shrank back from this step. Pitt smiled, and said plainly that after all the boat was sinking: and that he could do no more, in short, than just try and keep it afloat. Such was the desperate state to which matters had come. This was not a very complimentary way of proposing Charles; but the whole attitude of Pitt is quite characteristic, and, whether affected or not, it is impossible not to admire his Roman bearing. Such a negotiation, of course, failed.* No one felt it so much as the

* See Lord Hardwicke's letter, given in the curious "Anecdotes of Pitt's Life."

poor duke at Claremont, whose "disappointment, surprise, and concern" (so he wrote to Pitt) were certainly genuine. "In this *terrible situation*," he added, "*God help this poor country!*" This is almost ludicrous, for he had often used this phrase before in corresponding situations; and indeed it has often found its way to the lips of statesmen who have not been "considered" in new administrations.*

Charles, who did not know of the rather humiliating form in which he had been mentioned to his sovereign, was deeply grateful. He was even flattered, and wrote to Lord Temple at Stowe his opinion of the whole negotiation, which is epigrammatic and just enough. It was conceived in a short "interval of temper and reason, submitted to in despair, repented of as soon as resolved, and disgraceful in the highest degree to those who advised it. Let me assure you," he went on, "if I have been named in this negotiation as one Mr. Pitt thinks of any

* In the letter which Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald wrote to Peel, announcing his defeat by O'Connell at the Clare election, he used nearly the same form of despondency.

importance to an administration, sufficient to me is the honour of being thus denoted and remembered by him; and if my own conduct of late has manifested my firm though quiet resolution never to be withdrawn from men whose names, whose characters, whose principles I have reverenced and hold beyond any emoluments or honours I have obtained, my point is gained, and I am the very man, and in the very situation I wish to be." There is a great enthusiasm in this profession of faith. Perhaps, as I have before hinted, he really sincerely admired Pitt, or perhaps considered that he was the safest and securest of the many political prophets then abroad. But Lord Temple—"Squire Gawkey" as he was called—was Pitt's brother-in-law; and this ardent gratitude and devotion must necessarily travel to Pitt. He himself also expressed his gratitude to Pitt in a letter of the most earnest and almost obsequious kind.

The whole bringing in of these negotiations, as well as their breaking down, was set down to the arch-intriguer and favourite, Bute. When matters were patched, and it was agreed that the old ministry was to "go on," it was

only an arrangement, Bubb Doddington said, "to save quarter day." They were so disgusted with Bute's scheming, that terms were actually made for his banishment from London. It was first, indeed, proposed by Grenville that he should "go beyond the seas," and stay a twelvemonth away,* but this was afterwards modified into a less formal relegation to his new estate in Bedfordshire. No man of spirit could have consented to such an extraordinary and unconstitutional proscription; but the favourite, with the faint-heartedness of a true favourite, did as he was bid, and retired with his family down to Luton.

On these successive ministries were let off some good squibs. One took the shape of the

"WESTMINSTER RACES.

"1762. OCTOBER MEETING.—Lord Bute's *Favourite* (the noted *Scotch Stallion*) won the King's Plate, beating Mr. Pitt's famous horse *Guide* (which had won several plates in different parts of England) and Lord Temple's bald-faced mare *Moll Gawkey*.—Bets before starting: *Favourite* against the Field.

* See Lord Hardwicke's letter, quoted above.

"1763. SPRING MEETING.—Noblemen and Gentlemen's Great Subscription.

Lord Bute's dun horse *Treasurer* . . . 1
Lord Holland's black horse *Paymaster* . 2
Sir F. Dashwood's sorrel horse *Red Streak* . 3

"Duke of Newcastle's grey horse *Smuggler* (aged) fell, came in running. Duke of Devonshire's *Old Whig* ran out of the course. Mr. Wilkes's horse *Liberty, rode by himself*, took a lead at starting, but, being pushed hard by Mr. Bishop's black gelding *Privilege*, fell at the Devil's Ditch, and was nowhere.

"1763. OCTOBER MEETING.—King's Plate.

Duke of Bedford's horse *President* . . . 1
George Grenville's *Gentle Shepherd*. . . 2
Lord Sandwich's *Jenny Twitcher* . . . 3

"Charles Townshend's horse *Trimmer ran on the wrong side of the Post.* Mr. Pitt's bay horse *Guide* was in training for this match, and was expected to enter at the Post, but went off."

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLES'S INTRIGUES.

It was now the beginning of the year 1764. In February came on a tedious discussion on the "Navy Bills;" and this, though a pure matter of figures and accounts, brought out the wonderful Charles with equal ability; he plunged into calculations and balances, and drove Grenville "from one *entrenchment* to another." About the same time they were repeating a pleasant though personal jest of his. When he was told of a rich Miss Draycote, who was getting very stout, he replied very smartly, and with the ship accounts still in his head, that "her *tonnage* would soon be equal to her *poundage*."

His father had just died, the old Lord Town-

shend, ending a disreputable life, painfully dragged up and down the high roads from house to house by a low woman who wished to keep his family away from his death-bed. He left his son Charles nothing, and it was believed that there were fifty thousand pounds in the funds for the benefit of the woman who had watched his last agonies. Mr. Thackeray said, and said well, that the reading of the *vie intime* of these days becomes sickening and loathsome—the air is heavy and corrupt, and indeed any glimpse we have is of this character.

It may be a mere accidental coincidence, but it is odd, that in the very month of this disappointment, the fitful Charles should have been making advances towards the ministry. His means were narrow, and he lived extravagantly. The curious "Grenville Diaries" let out the secret. It is exactly what we might expect, when we hear that he was chafed and annoyed by Court neglect.

This was in August, 1763. In the September Charles had gone to Adderbury with his family, plainly hopeless of anything "turning up." But the country was no place for him.

He was looking wistfully towards London, and the Court, and politics, sighing for office and strife, and perhaps regretting that he had so committed himself to Pitt. Every little rumour was most welcome. "They triumph much," he wrote to Temple, "in securing the Duke of Bedford." But he is sure the duke "will try a second negotiation, for he consents unwillingly, hates his colleagues, and despises the cabinet." They were to have gone on a visit to Stowe, but Lady Dalkeith was suffering from ague, as he was himself. His brother George had sunk into a moody desponding state, seeing no hope of an opening for his politics. Charles, too, was dispirited, and spoke of his mind being ill at ease. He was soon up in London, but left it again in ill-humour. He had heard some stories of the ministry which put him out. Some one had shown him a letter of Whateley's, Secretary to the Treasury, who had boasted that the ministry and Lord Bute were firmly united and on the best terms; on the contrary, some one else had told him that Lord North had given out that the ministers would resign on the spot if the least influence of Lord Bute's was detected. No doubt he

was hoping that the latter story was true. "It is evident," he wrote bitterly, "that these rash and weak usurpers of power *have no system!*" They were not skilful enough, he said, to give their followers a consistent story, and an enemy need only see two of their party to be convinced of their undecided, wretched situation. Meanwhile Charles was corresponding with his cousin Bute, who was having secret audiences with the king, and to whom the king held the language of professions of disgust at his ministers. As for the Grenvilles, he had another bearing for them, the king approving of all they did. With this shameful duplicity one might well despair of the country, and, as Charles Townshend bade his friend Lord Temple, "draw the melancholy inference."

But Charles's own behaviour for only two or three months forces us to draw a yet more melancholy inference. Like the old Duke of Newcastle, his despondency over the state of the country seems to have been prompted by mere personal views. He was suffering again from rheumatism, and had taken bark enough, he said gaily, to turn him into a whole "trunk" of that medicine. He was chafing

because the political sky would not clear nor the clouds break and show the blaze of office. No wonder, indeed, the public drew him with a weathercock in his hat. In October only, Grenville and followers "were the weak and rash usurpers of power" with an "undecided wretched situation." In January—and so early in January as the 10th—a message came to the "rash and weak usurper" himself from Charles, through an understrapper, Bindley, that "he wished him well, &c., and that he (Charles) saw that nothing was to be done in opposition." But as for Mr. Pitt, he was a man "*nobody could act with*"—this too "a man" whom only a short time before he had vowed "never to be withdrawn from." As for Lord Temple, he was "neither a good man nor an agreeable man," and "as *for creatures like Tom Walpole and such as him, it was beneath his dignity to act with them.*" Are not these contemptuous familiarities—sure to have been carried and repeated to the persons who are thus dealt with—eminently characteristic of the man, in form and spirit spoken as though he did not care who heard him. "As for such creatures as Tom Walpole"—such a speech

was sure to travel to the king, and from the king back again. Crafty intriguers would have lost their tongues before they would suffer such incautious language to escape them. This, he said, he did not mean strictly as a message, but that Bindley might repeat it to Grenville.

On the next day, growing yet more eager, he sent another message, which was yet to be no message, through Jenkinson. It was a soliloquy which might be repeated. Grenville and Halifax *were the men he should like to act with.* He then made excuses for some behaviour of his in the House before the holidays —in short, for one of his personal bursts. He had said in the House, very awkwardly it would seem now, that so long as he lived he would never be of the same opinion with the right honourable gentleman. Grenville had replied with spirit, that no such threats would intimidate him; that he neither *courted* nor feared Townshend. Was there not a significance in the choice of this word, intelligible but to Charles alone? The publication of voluminous political correspondence, now so much in fashion, betrays these fatal secrets. But still

the very promptness of this remarkable tergiversation is something in Charles's favour. His eagerness—not, it must be said, for place, but for office and for power—hurried him away. He disdained the more gradual changes of a methodized hypocrisy.

To his series of complaints Grenville only sent back a cold but polite message. He was obliged for Mr. Charles Townshend's good opinion. He should be always glad to see his talents engaged in supporting the king. Grenville knew perfectly what sort of man he was dealing with, and that this indifference would only act as a stimulant.

Not long before, he had gone to Court, and had taken his young ward, the Duke of Buccleuch, to introduce. The king, behaving as if he were Louis Quatorze and not a constitutional king, turned his back and would not speak a word to him. This unbecoming animosity was but part of a system. Men were made to know that they must either be the "king's friends" or king's enemies. And when obliged by political necessity to give Lord Temple the Garter, he had ungraciously turned his face away and rudely flung the

collar on the new knight's neck. These might have been the pleasant amenities in vogue at Herenhausen, and might suit the despotic relations of a German Court, but they were unbecoming at St. James's.

But on the repentant Charles this royal neglect was pressing. He had become alive to the fact, that to be a minister without being at the same time a courtier, was the most difficult, as well as the most ungrateful, of human achievements. He sent round to Grenville to try and find out, if he should go up to Court now, would the king speak to him? Grenville, cold and official, would not take on himself to say. Except this much: it seemed to him very advisable that the king should be gracious to those who were inclined to support his Majesty, and cold to such as opposed him. Again an excellent Herenhausen doctrine, and suited for a constitution of chamberlains and officers. But in it there was a good hint for Charles. He was indignant at this repulse, and for a time took refuge in "sulk."

Meanwhile, a strange episode was going on. The ministers, it has been seen, had been actually driven to the ludicrous shift of

stipulating that Lord Bute should not remain in London, for fear of having opportunities of access to the king, and that nobleman was now at Luton, his country place, with his family. A gentleman who went down to see him, found the hall-door shut carefully and a bell put up. He was shown, not into the study or library, but into the dining-room, where he found the family under a weight of gloom. Bute was miserably dejected, sat there without speaking a word, and presently went to his room and was not seen again for that day. In the morning he came down as moody. It did certainly seem a sort of persecution, and it was but a petty and unworthy protection for ministers. But the Grand Vizier principle had set in, and the system of government by favourites. Lady Bute had naturally protested against this banishment, but with great humility. They had their daughters to bring out and marry, she said, and it was a little hard. It became intolerable. In a few days it was known that the dreaded favourite was in town. It indeed might have been known by the sudden cheerfulness of the king, which disquieted Mr.

Grenville a good deal. That cautious minister, who was keeping a diary with only serious entries, in which he always spoke of himself as "Mr. Grenville," had some other little matters to trouble him. As he rested so much on the breath of royal favour, even an alteration in royal manner or form of words was disturbing.

At a dinner party that day, the Duke of Bedford announced, in a rage, that he had good information that Bute had been with the king from seven in the morning until eleven. These were awful signs and tokens, and it is surprising that they did not alarm Charles.

Still chafing that his advances had not been received, he broke out one night in the House, and fell petulantly on Grenville about a breach of privilege. Grenville answered him haughtily, and bade him name any instance; whenever he was attacked, he was only too glad to defend himself; he was not afraid. Charles sat silent and embarrassed. He was seen to go home in very low spirits, and the next day once more apologized to Grenville. It seems as though desire for

rapprochement was becoming a sort of morbid feeling.

Several more months passed away. Charles grew still more desponding. At last, Grenville condescended to take some notice of all these advances, and spoke freely to a common friend. He said he felt very well disposed to Mr. Townshend, and was much his friend, but he saw the advantage of keeping to a resolution he had formed, not to try any accommodations or compromises, or *ask* any man to take high office with him; such arrangements were *voted* idle, and the Government must be struggled for openly. He then proceeded to soften these declarations by some handsome speeches about Mr. Townshend, complimenting him as being "determined and steady in the present situation. As for Pitt, he was isolated," &c.

Charles wrote all this to Temple, and added to it some remarkable exhortations on the state of things. "Consider," he said, "what the summer has taken from us, the manners of the times, Pitt's infirmities; surely *some resolution should be taken by, at least, us. Delay can only bring ignominious ruin.*" From

these words it is plain that the matter had gone further, and that Townshend was now standing in sulk, or despair, and that Grenville was beginning to make advances to him. For this took place in the first week of October, and actually at that very time a barrister, named Morton, had been calling very often at Townshend's house, officially commissioned by Grenville to sound Townshend. Morton saw him, and was assured by Charles that all reports of his having entered into any engagement hostile to Mr. Grenville were utterly untrue. Many other matters, too "delicate" to be committed to paper, were then discussed.

The negotiation, however, seems to have stood over; perhaps, until Charles, by earnest of some good behaviour, could show that he was to be depended on. At last, in the February of the next year, 1765, Grenville dined with Lord Townshend, who took him aside after dinner to tell some curious matters. It was to plead for his brother, who had *firmly determined* to support him. Even the other day, when Charles had been dining in company with Newcastle and others of the

Opposition, had he not tried to dissuade them from annoying the ministry on the question of Conway's dismissal? And now, would Grenville fix a meeting, say in presence of two others?

Grenville answered with his old official imperviousness. He would be glad to see Mr. Charles Townshend supporting the Government; he had much respect for Mr. Townshend; but he would only take leave to hint that, if he attempted to rise through another agency, or through any other support but his (Mr. Grenville's), he would resign on the spot. This referred to Bute, and was fair warning. No doubt Grenville suspected, and reasonably suspected, that Charles was trying to play his cousin against him.

The meeting at last came off, and on a Sunday. Grenville, true to his policy, had shown no eagerness for it, and with difficulty had been prevailed on to fix a day. Charles was a spectacle of true penitence—indeed almost abject in his professions. He solemnly engaged himself to support the Government. He was tired, he said, of Opposition. He wanted no place, no situation, no advancement. He

would try, too, and keep the Opposition from annoying the Government on Conway's affair. He declared solemnly that he had no connection with either Fox or Bute, the latter of whom he had not seen for months. No wonder Grenville at last accepted this submission with some graciousness.

It is impossible not to admire these tactics; had he been at all eager, Charles would have "taken airs," and been flighty. But this long probation, and steady hanging back, gave an artificial value to what was accorded. But what shall be said of the unstable Charles, who was to be received among the Opposition as a friend and fellow-soldier, and who was artfully to dissuade them from taking any step that might annoy the party he had joined? It was further covenanted that it was better to keep this meeting and little arrangement quite secret.* What was the immediate motive of this restless eagerness to enlist with Grenville seems hard now to discover. Charles must

* The details of this curious affair have been winnowed from the mass of chaff and official rubbish which blocks up a deal of valuable matter in "The Grenville Papers." The reader will find hints of this in other political memoirs and collections.

have had instinct enough to see that the premier's situation was not specially strong, and must besides have felt that, even if it were strong, Grenville was too despotic to allow of his taking any office that would bring much power. Perhaps the best solution is a simple one, and on the surface: the restlessness produced by protracted delay, and the cold denials of Grenville, acting on his impulsive nature, only made him more frantic and eager to obtain what was refused. The whole, however, is an admirable political lesson. By this sheer obstinate ministerial coyness and coldness, he had indeed secured Charles a bargain, literally on the terms of mere toleration, and without committing himself to anything. This is the true secret of dealing with fitful and impetuous natures. But now, being in possession of the secret history of the underhand negotiations that were going on between the volatile Charles and the Government, it will be easy to understand his starts and spasms of constancy which during this time so "intrigued" the politicians who were looking on, and who could only suspect that he was meditating some treachery. Even Walpole,

chronicling his odd inconsistencies, could only set them down to shiftiness, or to a sort of passive duplicity. He did not know what was going forward.

This curious little negotiation has anticipated some important matters; for during its progress arose the famous Wilkes imbroglio, one of those grand questions which occasionally rouse the nation. It is impossible not to admire the spirit and energy with which the battle was fought, or not to be amused at the almost defiant insolence of Wilkes. The more important question, whether a warrant could be issued in loose general terms—as, for instance, "against the authors, printers, and publishers of a newspaper"—without specifying any names, too dangerously approached the model of a *lettre de cachet*, then in such favour across the Straits. The violence of the whole proceedings and outrageous bearing of the king's advisers, were evidently prompted by dangerous confidants, and received a wholesome check in the surprising firmness of Pratt, the chief justice.

It was curious that the two men who had been at the little Dutch university, and had caused

some little ferment there too, should now be thrown together again under such circumstances. Even in this renewal of acquaintance it was only natural that Townshend should be governed by his fatally unsteady temper. He was friendly with Lord Temple, and Wilkes was much regarded by that nobleman. The Government spies dogging Wilkes day and night, and reporting his every motion, tracked Charles two or three times to Wilkes's house.* It was natural indeed that he should admire Wilkes's bold insolence and insubordination, and believe that it represented vast power; but then was to set in the usual reaction. The question of privilege protecting a member, and the broader one of the validity of a general warrant, furnished matter for bold and stirring debates in the House. The Government lawyers fought the matter with spirit, and quoted technical opinions of the judges, which gave a fine opening to Pitt—who detested lawyers and their narrow finesse—who now fell on Norton as he had done on Mansfield. When they quoted judges to him, he said in

* See the curious report of the "Detectives" in "The Grenville Papers."

his haughty way, "*he* was no judge, but sat there to judge judges. No violation of the constitution had ever wanted the sanction of a judge." But Norton, having carried a portion of the question, began to grow insolent in his triumph, and threw out the indecent remark that, if he were sitting as a judge he should pay no more regard to this resolution of the House than he would to that of a *drunken porter*. There was no fitness in this extraordinary flight. But it was long remembered, and Charles Townshend did not let it pass.

For some weeks before, the members had noticed him very busy over black-letter law books and searching the journals; and he had told inquirers very ostentatiously that he was "making up" the question, and that he had six clerks busy copying and hunting up precedents, and looking out cases. Naturally, after such promise, his speech was looked to with interest. Recollecting that this was about the middle of February, 1764, and that precisely at this time he was making secret advances to Grenville—which advances were being declined—his attitude becomes ludicrously absurd. In private he was abasing himself

to the man whom in public he was striving to overthrow;—it almost suggests the late Mr. Moore's alternative to Byron, of a fast and warm friendship, or a duel—and in public he was on the "patriot side," and linked with Pitt.

It was considered a capital speech, full of law, history, and argument. The flood of precedents and black-letter law rather astonished the House, and he went through the authorities like any lawyer examining the Licensing Act, and the "cases," and the decisions of Scroggs, Vaughan, and others.

He fell on Norton with great wit and vigour. Had that lawyer lived in the days of "ship-money," would they not have heard him special pleading for the postponement of the discussion of its illegality? Then he praised Pitt; the man he was secretly assuring the minister he was ready to give up, and with whom he would forswear all communication, he affected to compliment. Pitt little dreamed of that surprising duplicity. But a more astounding change was yet to come. He told the House that, as for Wilkes he *abhorred him!* and then gave his wit play, and drew a very severe picture of the dema-

gogue whom the detectives had seen so often at his house. Then he extolled the old pure Whig noblemen of 1688—meaning, of course, to commend himself to Pitt. The crown, however, carried the day, but by a very narrow majority of only fourteen. It was thought that ministers must resign; but the Opposition was languid. No one suspected Charles Townshend's intrigue, though the doubts of his infidelity were now almost chronic; and it is amusing to see how unconscious was a shrewd observer, who watched everything narrowly and gathered up all the political whispers and gossip. "Charles Townshend," wrote down Mr. Walpole, in his "Mémoires," "neglected by the Court, seemed zealously *attached to us*. Unfortunately, we could neither do with him nor without him."

On the night of one of these spirited Wilkes debates, he entered the House with Pitt, and to him confidently prophesied the defeat of the minister he was coquetting with. When some friends "rallied" him on his mistaken views, he said in his off-hand way that they went *into* the House with a majority, but that Lloyd, the agent who carried the "Minister's Pocket

Book," had made converts in the usual recognised way. The tribe of Lloyds, Mackays, and Bradshaws, filled the office of the more modern "whip." Then, the cant phrase ran, "to carry the Minister's Pocket Book." During this debate, too, one of Charles's rough jests was launched. A Master of the Rolls, sitting in the House in his great wig, had welcomed the adjournment, he said, as giving him an opportunity for considering the authorities, and after such consideration had announced that he was of the same opinion still. On which Mr. Townshend started from his seat and said, he was sorry to see that what his honourable friend had found in his nightcap he had lost in his wig. This was called "one of Mr. Townshend's happy *bon mots*," but which is of a poor sort, and scarcely a *bon mot* at all.

But he could not yet "empty his head" of that General Warrants question, and the labours of the six clerks who had been so laboriously searching and transcribing for him were too important to be expended in a single speech. The supercilious indifference of Grenville was still galling him. *That* did

not stand in his way; rather the vanity of the moment—as was always the case with him—dazzled him to every other consideration. He would write a "dashing" pamphlet—this was the age of pamphlets—that would crackle and sparkle; which should not bear his name on the title, but which all men should secretly learn was his. Very soon "The Defence of the Minority" appeared, brought out by Almon, a radical, turbulent publisher, and a friend of Wilkes. But just at the same time there came out another pamphlet, on Conway's dismissal from his regiment on account of his vote against the Government, which came from no less skilful a hand than Horace Walpole's. Walpole's eclipsed the other, and reading over the two together it is easy to see the superiority. Charles, however, was very eager about his. He despatched it down to Stowe, explaining that he meant to deal with the matter soberly and argumentatively, and adding, naively enough, that he "thought it most prudent to assume the temper and deportment of a serious *and impartial man*." "Already," he added eagerly, "it has had effect;" and he was preparing to

second "*the blow.*" Mr. Pitt, he had heard, said it had had a prodigious effect, and converted many. Even Grenville had admitted that it was of great weight, and *very hostile* —an impression that was very welcome news to the writer, for it had, no doubt, been launched with a view to yet further pique that minister into an advance. But the sanguine Townshend was mistaken in both these views, for at that very moment it was known in town that Pitt had contemptuously declined to look at it, and at last, having been prevailed on to look over it, found it full of mistakes. Grenville, too, was not in the least affected by it. But the worst was, Walpole's little *brochure* flew past his, and, to his annoyance, had far more success; and with some faint praise, he wrote to a friend that it was not what he expected. Pitt's judgment was quite correct. One of the inferior ministerial "hacks" was put to answer Townshend, and "showed up" many errors, if not misrepresentations. The most serious of these was his describing the motion before the House as limited to warrants in the case of a seditious libel—which was indeed the question *intro-*

duced; but he suppressed the fact that in a day or two it was altered and became very different. This was certainly disingenuous. So, too, with legal precedents, in which he was equally unfortunate. One specimen will be enough: What! asked Charles. Is it denied that there are no precedents for Parliament inquiring into legal abuses by motion before the House? Look back at the cases of Chief Justices Keeling and Scroggs. But it was replied with good force that these were chief justices at the head of the highest tribunals, and amenable to no other court but Parliament.

One of Charles's jovial friends, who dined and drank with him—Gilly Williams—wrote to Selwyn the news of the pamphlet's failure, with the true satisfaction of a jovial friend. "He has been well answered," he said; "it has been proved that Charles has gone *on false facts, which you know is uncommon*."

Wilkes was, of course, annoyed at his desertion; and there presently appeared in the papers an anonymous squib, in which it was proposed to classify the politicians of the day according to their own opinions, drawing the Ministerialists in charcoal, and the Opposition in

chalk. This conceit, taken, indeed, from the *North Briton*, was pleasantly dealt with. But there was a difficulty in dealing with certain men, whose classification was next to hopeless. Men, it said, "like Mahomet's coffin, in suspense; who stand between *aye* and *no*, like the ass of the schoolmaster between two bundles of hay; or like Prince Volscious—hip, hop, hip, hop—one boot on, and the other boot off. These statesmen, therefore, of the neuter gender, we can place in neither list. In the middle, therefore, upon stilts, one foot on one list, the other on another, I have placed one right honourable gentleman as the grand arch-type of political scepticism." And the writer then hints very plainly to the *North Briton* that he ought to allow this gentleman to remain in a state of political indifference; but having discovered his bias, the editor will soon, he hopes, favour the public with a sketch in chalk or in charcoal. This was a threat there was no mistaking, and although the letter was signed "An Alderman of London," it was known to have been written by Wilkes himself. Then followed the scale:—

A PEEP INTO FUTURITY.

CHALK. CHARCOAL.

The Right Hon. Charles Townshend.

Duke of Grafton.	Lord Grosvenor.
Duke of Portland.	Earl Powis.
Thomas Crowse.	Wellbore Ellis.
	Paul Whitehead.*

&c.

Fox—now Lord Holland—growing old, and feeling the effects of a "hard" life and a dissipated career, had met with a stroke, and this no doubt quickened Charles's eagerness. As he had been restlessly anxious to win the favour of Grenville, so he had now set his heart on the Pay Office. This eagerness began to grow on him, and that morbid impatience to be strengthened. He had fallen much into that wild, boisterous, and almost witty company, which boasted of Lord March, Gilly Williams, Lord Coventry, Selwyn, and Storey, who, for their drinking, and gambling, and general

* From the New Foundling Hospital for Wit.

debauchery, over which was spread a thin film of high spirits and pleasantry, were almost the scandal of London.

To these he gave many a dinner, and from these received as many "a rebound," as the return dinner was called. At these festivals he let himself out fearlessly, with the candour and free speech which was his characteristic in all that concerned his hopes and plans. One of the jovial friends, after one of these feasts, said he could not pretend to affirm "what Charles was *now*." He had lost all bitterness, however, and they thought was looking towards the Pay Office. The same "friend," when Lord Holland got his stroke of apoplexy, wrote again that Charles was "looking for his dissolution." Selwyn was in Paris about this time, and received a commission from Charles to purchase him a fine service of china, but it was *to be smuggled over*. This was for his entertainments. And, indeed, he appears from this time forward to have grown a little languid in politics, and to have flung himself more into the coarser excitement of conviviality. Had he lived longer he might have sunk into the rough, sensual, drinking,

swearing man of politics, a school of which Rigby was the master.

The American questions and Pitt's lofty declamation on the subject were embarrassing to the ministers, but Charles Townshend sat silent and would not aid them. Indeed when it was thought they were falling, it pleasantly went about "that they were actually dead and only lying in state, and that Charles Townshend was one of the mutes." He even carefully absented himself from the House under pretence of illness, to avoid being obliged to do some work for his hire. In short, every step in his life was to have some odd tone or complexion different from that of other men under the circumstances. In 1763 had come the turn of the "Bloomsbury Gang," the Bedfords and their political highwayman and bully, Rigby; though this was indeed only the old insipid Grenville sugar and water, with a "dash" of the Bedford brandy. But, as I have said often before, the secret of all this shiftiness was his restless vanity and consciousness of his own brilliancy and superiority to the small beings that were about him. Whatever was done

with him, he was always thinking that he had been thrown away, and could have done better. That light speech, "as for such creatures as Tommy Walpole and the rest, it was beneath his dignity to act with them," was a faithful picture of his habitual tone of mind.

But it was noticed that he had taken a sort of pique against Grenville, no doubt recollecting all that minister had made him suffer; and the only support Charles seemed to give his colleagues was an occasional attack on the fallen minister; and once, when an alteration in the navigation laws was proposed, Grenville protested, calling it, absurdly enough, "that sacred Act," Charles said he was devoid of honour or honesty.

The ministry were now growing anxious to gain him, and another glimpse of the secret history of the time—a private letter of the Premier—tells how one of the smaller jackals had been with him "six times," and he was found "in the best humour imaginable with himself and the Government." He hinted that his aspirations lay in the direction of the delightful haven known as the Pay Office; and, as far as they minded him, he

would be inclined to wait until Lord Holland's death (Fox), the present incumbent's, whom, with strange candour, he said he wished dead, "and so did everybody!" Mr. Jenkinson, to whom this report was made, writes it all to Grenville, and says that he has found out Charles Townshend's intention of going to Court the next day. "I should think," hints the wily politician, "that a good reception would increase his present good-humour, and be of use."

Those negotiations were suspected, if not known, for it was said that the terrible moral bruiser, Churchill, who died at the end of this year, was only waiting to hear of his declared adhesion to the Court, to launch one of his bitter satires from Boulogne. In January his new sympathies bore fruit, when on a motion to reduce the navy, it was opposed by Townshend, who announced, in a sort of parenthesis, that he had always supported the peace. "Nobody here was surprised," says Walpole, and there was no reason why they should; for many months before, on the question of the preliminaries, he had taken the same course. Walpole talked of this

"setting himself up to auction," and says ironically, "Will you want to know what place he has got?" and hopes that he *will* get one, for this reason—that he always did harm to the side he adopted. He then quoted the one old epigram he had made before on another Charles, quite as unstable, but more open to the suspicion of political dishonesty—Charles Yorke:

> "One Charles who ne'er was ours,
> You've got 'tis true;
> To make the grace complete,
> Take t'other too."

"I rejoice that we have got rid of him," adds the letter writer; then, speculating on the prospects of Lord George Sackville, who was following the same tactics, says, "If Charles is disappointed himself, what may a man be who trusts to him?"

How the king all this time loathed his ministers, and was wearily plotting to get rid of them, how he finally, in May, summarily dismissed them, and in six weeks had to submit to the well-deserved mortification of having to take them back again within a week, not being able to provide himself with another, is known to every political reader. Grown

insolent by this victory, they were to fall in a few weeks.

They proposed almost arrogant terms to the king, but which were indeed only necessary for their safety. These were mainly directed against the Favourite and his influence, and must certainly have been most humiliating for the king. But one condition was, at last, to secure for Charles Townshend the wages of his political coquetting. The king was required to dismiss Lord Holland from the Pay Office, and appoint Charles in his room. This was done, after a short struggle, and Charles sank down upon the pleasant cushions of that easy sinecure.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW SHUFFLE.

We are now at the year 1765, leaving behind the interval during which the king had to endure what seemed to him the iron yoke of Grenville—a yoke, too, which he strove to rid himself of by shabby and unkingly shifts. There was still the ban upon Lord Bute, and the king had the same hostility to his ministers.

But now, in '65, the great American question had drawn on, and Grenville had made the fatal proposal to tax America, bringing on his famous Stamp Act. Never was there so languid a debate on so vital a measure; and an American delegate sitting in the gallery of the House heard Charles Townshend support the pro-

posal, and speak of the Americans as "children planted by our care, and nourished by our indulgence," which provoked the fine burst from Barré, in reply, "Children planted by your care! no, your oppression planted them in America; they fled from your tyranny into a then uncultivated land."* This great question was dealt with so recklessly and carelessly by the various ministries, and so "mulishly" by the king, that we cannot deal very severely with Charles Townshend, if he was equally reckless, and showed his "weathercock" quality in dealing with it. It will be seen, what is not generally suspected, that he had almost a more direct share in causing the revolt than George Grenville, and his unlucky Act, and resorted to the same unworthy shifts. At last the Rockingham ministry came in, in July, 1765; and Charles, who had intrigued with Pitt, and Grenville, and Bute, could now—secure in his new office—look on with indifference at a new shuffle. Here was the

* Another account gives the incautious speech, "Children nurtured, &c.," to Grenville; while the reported debates leave both speech and answer out altogether. But it seems unlikely that the American could have been mistaken: and it will be recollected that Charles had been already exercising his wit on Barré.

irrepressible old Duke of Newcastle, his ancient and weary head above the waters once more; here was Conway, a man of such indecision that it was said he would be miserably disturbed to choose between two doors going out of a room, now put to lead the House, with not a single man of marked genius or ability. There were no less than three Townshends in the ministry: the well-known "Tommy;" a Charles Townshend of Honningham, and the brilliant and best known Charles, who had no doubt declined ostentatious companionship with so weak a crew, and demanded the rich sinecure of the Pay Office. But most curious of all, here was now in office an old college friend, one who had been on the Dutch canals, at the old Dutch university, Dodswell or Dowdeswell, a respectable and mediocre creature, feeble but tolerably "safe," and now, perhaps to his own surprise, Chancellor of the Exchequer. To him too Charles wrote a letter of speculation upon the changes there, so earnest, and with a despondency so genuine over the state of affairs, that it puts his character in a new light. Even the few sentences now to be given are in a terse and vigorous style that show his powers

of composition to have been of a high order. He talks of his "apprehensions from seeing the ascendancy of the Duke of Newcastle," and the "declamation of the Master of Hayes," and then passes on to a fine picture of indecision, in which he might be painting himself "We hear Yorke," he says, "will not accept. Every passion of his intermits; or has Norton threatened? Alas! *will either abate upon seeing him shrink?* By Lord Camden's situation, all refuge is now intercepted for his fear; for in the language of the Psalmist, if he stays in the Lower House there is Norton, if he goes up to the other, there is Camden also."

The old intimacy must have remained, for Charles Townshend wrote to him almost affectionately, "that his best wishes, in this, as in everything else, accompanied him." He was delighted to hear Dowdeswell's name mentioned so often in the negotiations. He had the reputation—which was somewhat precious in those times—of being an honest man; and had one encounter with Grenville in the House, in which he showed spirit, courage and manliness, and brought down the House.

These odd changes, which were the mere changes of places, and so affected only the Palace and Privy, must have mystified the public outside. They had by this time begun to appreciate, though scarcely to understand, Charles Townshend's strange caprices. Nothing can be better than the pasquinades of the day on this subject; and the superiority of the political satire of that time will be manifest by putting it beside the feeble and diluted personality of the Charivari of our own day. To understand the little "skit" that follows, the reader will recollect that the king had failed in his plot to get rid of his Grenville masters; that the Scotch had been ignominiously routed, and that finally Grenville had fallen in his turn, and that now the Rockingham ministry had been formed; that Mr. Makinsey, one of the Bute "set," had been dismissed; and that there had been a weavers' riot in reference to the importation of foreign silks, in which the Duke of Bedford had been mobbed.* In *The London Chronicle* and other papers there

* If the reader will consult a few chapters of "Walpole's History of George III.," beginning with the eighth, he will understand the situation.

was a corner for the ship news, which had a special jargon of its own, which was thus pleasantly parodied:

"INTELLIGENCE EXTRAORDINARY.

"SHIP NEWS.

"*Portsmouth*,

"*April 20th*, 1765.

"Yesterday during a *thick fog*, the *Weaver's Delight*, Captain Bloomsbury,* the *Gentle Shepherd*, Captain Bridget, and the *True Friend*, Captain Twitcher,† *run foul* of the *Royal George* guardship on the Mother Bank, and returned into *harbour* in a *shattered condition*."

(This alluded to the Regency Bill and the Princess, which had been "brought on" during the previous day.)

"The *St. Patrick*, Captain Hilsborough; the *Blenheim*, Captain Marlborough; the *Trentham*, Captain Gower; the *Sweepstakes*, Captain Weymouth;‡ the *Gimcrack*, Captain Bolingbroke; the *Bristol*, Captain Nugent; the *Toper*, Captain Rigby.

* The Duke of Bedford.

† Lord Sandwich.

‡ Lord Weymouth was a debauched, gambling young peer.

"N.B.—The Trentham, the Sweepstakes, and the Toper were *towed out of the harbour* by the *Weaver's Delight*, Captain Bloomsbury."

(Striking a few names out, it then went on :)

"*May* 15.—This morning we had a *terrible squall* in the *harbour*, by the violence of which the *Fox*, Captain Holland; the *Irish Darling*, Captain Percy; and the *Superbe*, Captain Mackenzie, were *driven* from their *moorings*, and forced out to sea.

"*July* 1.—*Cleared outwards:* the Weaver's Delight, the Gentle Shepherd (Grenville), the True Friend."

(They were of the Duke of Bedford's party.)

"*July* 8.—No ships of war at *Spithead*."

(Ministry not formed.)

"*July* 10.—*Arrived* and sailed into harbour :—the *Good Intent*, Captain Rockingham; the *Endeavour*, Captain Dowdeswell; the *Diligence*, Captain Conway; the *Experiment*, Captain Portland; the *Happy Return*, Captain Yorke (a good stroke at this lawyer's vacillation), *all* for *Newcastle*, under convoy of the *Cumberland* MAN OF WAR and the *Crown storeship*. The *Temeraire*, Captain Onslow,

and a *great many others* are in sight, but can't get their names this post.

"*July* 14.—*Remain* in the *harbour* with his Majesty's ships as per last:—The *True Briton*, Captain Granby; the *Heart of Oak*, Howe; *Good Steward*, Talbot; and the *Townshend Flyboat*."

(The *Townshend Flyboat!* Could there be a better name for the brilliant but inconstant Charles? It then goes on:)

"The *Townshend Flyboat* was with some difficulty brought to her *moorings*, where she now lies; but is expected to sail on a *roving* cruise as soon as the *wind* changes.

"The *Laurel*, Captain Pitt, and the *Olive*, Captain Bute, are expected to sail on a *joint* cruise against the common enemy the first fair wind. Other advices say that the *Laurel's* stern posts not being sound, she must first come into dock and have a *thorough repair* before she can proceed.

"It is supposed that the *Temple* will *not* be put in commission again, as the carpenters on examining her have reported that her *back* is broke.

"*Gravesend, Aug.* 24.—Passed by: the *Thistle*, the Happy Janet, the Charming Moggy, and

the Highland Laddie, all from Leith, with Scotch pebbles for Westminster.

"*Aug.* 25.—We hear that his Majesty's ship *Newcastle* will soon have a new figure-head, the old one being almost worn out.

"The *Prudent*, Captain Hertford, a three-decker, lately stationed on the French coast, will sail in a short time for Ireland, in order to protect the trade. The *Weymouth*, which was appointed for this service, not being reckoned a sufficient force."

(Lord Weymouth had been named Lord Lieutenant, but Lord Hertford, who was Ambassador, had been substituted.)

"The *Twitcher* tender, commanded by Lieut. Antisejanus, having been missing for some time, 'tis feared that she has shared the fate of the unfortunate *Wilkes Fireship*, which foundered in the Channel in the year 1763."

This was Lord Sandwich's scurrilous retainer, Parson Scott, who wrote pamphlets for him under the title of "Antisejanus."

In this pleasant fashion, with such hard hitting, and yet with such delicacy, were the political men ridiculed. Not in buffooning

rhymes, into which the commonest *argot* of the costermongers is given a glad welcome; not in poor puns, so poor that the syllables have to be bent and dislocated and forced out of all shape to make them fit, did the wits of that day hold up and correct the follies of the statesmen.

Perhaps another specimen of this excellent fooling, from a later era, but still dealing with the Conways, Rigbys, and Germains, will not be out of place here. The reader will bear in mind that the Italian Opera was then a *fureur*.

At "ST. STEPHEN'S THEATRE" the managers humbly begged leave to lay before the nobility and gentry a list of their *singers*, *dancers*, and instrumental performers for the ensuing season, with the following cast:

SERIOUS OPERA.

1*st Serious Man.* Sig. Georgio Germeno.
1*st Serious Woman.** La Generalina Convay.
2*nd Serious Men.* Sig. Carlo Jenkinsoni.
Sig. Tomasino Tonsini
(Tommy Townshend).

Tenori. Sig. Edouardo Turlo.
Sig. Avocato Scotese.

COMIC OPERA.

1*st Buffo.* Sig. Federico Norti.
1*st Buffo Caricato.* Sig. Ricardo Rigbi
detto sileno.
2*nd Buffos.* Sig. Edmundo Burko.
Sig. Conte Nugente.
Principal Dancers. Sig. Antonio Storer, &c.
Painter. Sig. Carlo Volpone.
Prompter. Sig. Flecero Nortoni.
Tailor. Sig. Waistcoat Barone.
Attendant Mutes. Sig. Gheraddi Hamiltoni.
Sig. Georgio Selvino.
Sig. Soame Jenins, &c.

"The managers hope for the encouragement of the public, as they have engaged most of the above-mentioned performers at very high salaries, except those marked thus (*), who belong to various country companies, and perform for their own amusement.

"P.S.—Those who have PLACES are desired to come early to the theatre, otherwise they cannot be secured."

The Tailor to the company was a new Irish peer, whose choice of a title "Baron Westcote," caused great amusement at the clubs.

One of the jests of the time a little later was a proposal for forming a female administration, and a regular programme of office was printed:

"First Lady of the Treasury—Lady Northumberland.
Chancellor of the Exchequer—Miss Chudleigh.
President of the Council—*Lady Townshend.*
Lady High Chancellor—Duchess of Queensberry.
Mistress of the Horse—Lady Sarah Barbury.
First Lady of the Admiralty—Lady Pocock.
Paymistress-General of the Forces—Lady Dalkeith.
Captain of the Band of Pensioners—Lady Chatham."

There was a special appropriateness in the two last appointments.

Rockingham and his friends determined to be patriotic and constitutional, and repealed

the Stamp Act. The wonderful Charles had now changed his mind about this measure, and when in the December of 1765, Grenville had submitted some haughty and frantic resolutions on the necessity of maintaining that measure, Charles Townshend and Norton went to him, and at last prevailed on him to withdraw it. Charles's manner of effecting this was characteristic. He asserted with extraordinary vehemence his entire approbation of the Stamp Act, and paid Grenville all sorts of compliments as its author, soothed his vanity, and almost hinted that it should be enforced.

Early in the next year the repeal of this Stamp Act was formally moved and carried. Charles voted for it, though he kept away from the debates, and never spoke,—pretending illness, his admirer Walpole says. But another admirer of a warmer and more generous class, almost by a sort of accident, is able to clear him from this insinuation, though he may not ever have heard of such a charge.

Edmund Burke, long after, reviewing Charles's tergiversations, very tenderly bore

witness to his friend's eagerness in the matter. "He would have spoken for it," said Burke, "only that he was suffering from illness, *real, as I knew, and not political.*" Such testimony may be fairly put against Walpole's tittle-tattle.

Meanwhile the king's behaviour to his ministers was of the most disloyal and ungenerous kind. Lord Rockingham, a high-minded nobleman, was wholly unsuited for such treatment. His Majesty affected to give his councillors support and encouragement, but the Court party were actually stimulated to oppose them in every possible way.*

* A specimen of this unkingly behaviour will be enough. In an interview with Lord Strange, the king asked, was it actually given out that he was for the repeal of the Stamp Act? Lord Strange said it was, and that ministers industriously circulated this in all directions. Lord Strange left the closet, and told every one of the king's protest and implied dissatisfaction. The ministry in self-defence, and to save their credit, had actually to oblige their king to give under his own hand a sort of shifty denial of this imputation. "I desire," he wrote, "you would tell Lord Strange that I am now, and have been heretofore, for modification; but when many were for enforcing, I was then for a repeal." There was another paper to help out the royal shuffling. "No. 2. Lord Rockingham's question was, whether he was for enforcing the Stamp Act or for the repeal. The king was clear that repeal was preferable to enforcing, and permitted Lord Rockingham to declare that as his opinion." It is a striking proof of

All this time the king was leading his ministers with marks of favour and caresses, and all this time was plotting their overthrow. As there was such deceit in the "Fountain of Honour," so it is not surprising to find it in lower grades. The secret of this shifty behaviour on the part of the king was the old secret—the unconstitutional influence of the "king's friends," and of the chief king's friend, Bute. That nobleman was flitting up and down between London and the country, secretly intriguing and disturbing everything. What follows properly belongs to the archives of the detective offices, for by its agency the intriguers were watched, and to such mean shifts were the Opposition and the Ministry, in self-defence, compelled to resort.

Years after Lord Bute made this remarkable declaration "on his solemn word of honour," that he had never seen his Majesty, except at a levée, or offered any advice or opinion on

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the accuracy of the "Anecdotes of Pitt," that it gives the details of this mysterious incident, which was years after corroborated by the "Rockingham Papers." The anecdotes, however, state that the king refused to give his opinion in writing to Lord Rockingham—a humiliation which, perhaps, he might at first have declined. A good Life of George III. is one of the wants of the time.

offices or measures, directly or indirectly, from the year 1765. Nothing can be more explicit, yet nothing looks more untrue. First, let us see how carefully the lower spies dogged his motions, and tracked him to the princess-mother, on the eve of the change of ministry.

"AN EIGHTEEN DAYS' FAITHFUL JOURNAL, ENDING A FEW DAYS PREVIOUS TO THE MINISTER'S SHAKING HANDS, IN THE YEAR 1766.

"*Tuesday, June* 24, 1766.—From Audley Street, the Favourite set out about one o'clock, in a post-coach and four, for Lord Lichfield's at Hampton Court, and came home again at ten at night; went out directly afterwards in a chair to Miss Vansittart's, maid of honour to P. D. of W. in Sackville Street; staid there but a very little while, and then went to Carlton House, and returned home about twelve o'clock.

"*Wednesday*, 25.—From Audley Street, the Favourite set out in a chair at half-past six in the evening, went into Sackville Street, as before, staid there till past ten, then went to

Carlton House, and returned home about twelve.

"*Thursday*, 26.—From ditto, the Favourite set out at half-past six in the evening in a chair, went into Sackville Street as before, staid there till ten, then went to Carlton House, and came home at twelve.

"*Friday*, 27.—At seven this morning the Favourite set out from Audley Street, for his seat in Bedfordshire.

"*Sunday*, 29.—The earl returned from Bedfordshire this day to dinner; set out as before at a quarter past six for Sackville Street, staid there till about ten, then went to Carlton House, and came home at twelve.

"*Monday*, 30.—From Audley Street, the Favourite set out in a chair a quarter past six, went into Sackville Street, staid there till about ten, then went to Carlton House, and came home as usual at twelve.

"*Tuesday, July* 1.—From ditto, at half-past six, in a chair to Sackville Street, staid there till ten, then to Carlton House, and thence home at twelve.

"*Wednesday*, 2.—From ditto, ditto, ditto, and ditto.

"*Thursday*, 3.—At six this morning, the Favourite set out from Audley Street for his seat in Bedfordshire.

"*Saturday*, 5.—The Favourite returned to Audley Street, from ditto this day to dinner; at half-past six went to Sackville Street, staid there as usual till about ten, then to Carlton House, and afterwards came home about twelve.

"*Sunday*, 6.—At half-past six to Sackville Street as usual, about ten to Carlton House, and home at twelve as before.

"*Monday*, 7.—At three quarters past six to Sackville Street as usual, about ten to Carlton House, and home at twelve.

"*Tuesday*, 8.—At half-past six to Sackville Street, about ten to Carlton House, and home at twelve.

"*Wednesday*, 9.—At half-past six to Sackville Street, about ten to Carlton House, and home at twelve.

"*Thursday*, 10.—This morning at seven the Favourite and his lady set out from Audley Street for Bedfordshire.

"*Saturday*, 12.—Returned this day from Bedfordshire to dinner, and, being Lord Mount Steuart's birthday, he went out at

eight this evening to Sackville Street, staid there till past ten, then went to Carlton House, and returned home about twelve.

"*Sunday*, 13.—At half-past six to Sackville Street, staid there till past ten, then to Carlton House, and home at twelve.

"*Monday*, 14.—At half-past six to Sackville Street, staid there till ten, then to Carlton House, staid there till past twelve, and then returned home.

"N.B.—The curtains of the chair from Audley to Sackville Street were constantly drawn, and the chair taken into the house."

The Duke of Richmond was watching also, and his spies found out for him, that on Saturday, July 12, "the king, at about eleven, went to the princess at Kew, although she was not there. About one, Lord Bute was seen coming from Ealing by a by-road, so that 'tis probable he had again been to meet his Majesty at Kew. Lord Bute had been at Luton between the Monday and the Saturday." Another report was found among the duke's papers of the same day's proceedings, in the handwriting of a detective

who had been appointed to watch the king. "Only General Carpenter came at half-past seven to ride with his Majesty. A little before eight a person came on horseback in great haste, which I took to be some servant out of livery, and since believe to be one of Mr. Pitt's servants. A little after eight his Majesty rode out and returned about nine. About eleven his Majesty went to Kew; *I followed.* He returned again at twelve."*

But specimens of this duplicity would be endless. When leave was given to bring in the bill for the repeal of the Stamp Act, the king writes to his minister to thank him for the news of the debate, "which," he adds, with apparent satisfaction, "must be reckoned a very favourable appearance for the repeal of the Stamp Act in that House." Yet in reference to the same division, a gentleman who had just come from the Court told the Duke of Bedford he never saw the king so affected as by the news of this victory, and that he was trying to change his ministry. But his

* In justice, however, to Lord Bute, it should be mentioned that these may have been only *attempts* to see the king; and Lord Brougham relates a story which would appear to bear out that view.

Majesty wrote again to Lord Rockingham on the same matter—"I am *much pleased* that the appearance was so good yesterday;" and to General Conway, "Nothing can in my eyes be more advantageous than the debate in the House this day." This was his tone after the debate. Before, it was no less explicit. "Talbot," he wrote to Lord Rockingham, "is as right as I can desire—strong for declaring our right, but willing to repeal, and has handsomely offered to attend the House daily, and answer the very indecent conduct of those who oppose with so *little manners and conduct*." Those who did so were the king's friends, and it will be well to bear in mind this remarkable declaration when considering the king's behaviour at a late stage of the bill. But if further proof was wanting, it is to be found in a letter written to his brother, the Duke of York, who had spoken on the danger of repealing the Stamp Act. The king actually wrote to thank him, and added that "his sentiments *were as strong as ever against the repeal*." *

* See the Rockingham Memoirs, vol. i., *passim*; and the Grenville Papers.

When this question of Grenville's came on, Lord Charlemont was in town, and attended the debate, on January 21, 1766. It was a very brilliant and spirited one, Grenville asking why should not America, like Ireland, support its own establishment? Charles Townshend was present, and to the astonishment of the House, prepared as it was for any inconsistency, Charles announced that he was against repealing the Stamp Act. It will be recollected that this was his original view, when he was paying court to Grenville. Disgusted by that minister's want of cordiality in meeting his advances, he had attended a meeting directed against the policy of the act, and in the House had voted against it. He now went back to his original opinion, not out of compliment to Grenville, but because he knew it was the Bute and Court view. He was taunted on all sides with this inconsistency, but this only brought out his almost delightful versatility. He always rose with the embarrassment of the situation. He said he was still against the Stamp Act, but that a revenue *must* be got out of America. He scoffed at what he called "the absurd notion" of a dis-

tinction between external and internal taxation. In short, he only thought of the present difficulty, and, as Lord Charlemont said, "he only endeavoured to get out of the scrape and *defend himself against his present antagonists, without regard to his connections.*" A happy description, that might apply to more than one member of the present House.

Meantime the king's friends were at their old tactics. Dubious but influential supporters of the ministry wrote to their chief to know the king's "inclinations" on particular subjects, hinting that if these were adverse their support was not to be counted on. There was indeed what some one called "a micmac" at Court. The king's friends in office were actively voting against the ministry; all sorts of secret negotiations were going on against them, and it was noticed that the nearer they approached their fall the more the king loaded them with caresses and favours. Such a situation must have been galling and all but degrading to a high-souled nobleman, and a gallant and honourable soldier like Conway.* Charles

* Walpole says that the king told his friends *they might vote against him and keep their places.*

himself began to see signs of a new arrangement with more "stability," which was only to be based on the king's favour and the king's favourites. Grenville, too, had *his* information, and he had discovered that on February the 4th, Bute had been four hours with the king. Three days later Lord Eglinton, Bute's friend, told him that Bute was with the king. Yet on the day following Bute met Grenville and told him solemnly that for twelve months he had never seen the king.

They tried to strengthen themselves by negotiations with Pitt, but the king artfully threw obstacles in the way, wishing them to continue in their weakness. The opening for this negotiation seems to have been a conversation of Charles Townshend's with Pitt, and one of those unmeaning and oracular utterances which the great commoner was fond of throwing out. This Charles reported to his friends. It led to nothing. But Charles himself might have given more satisfactory assistance to his friends than merely drawing the rich emoluments of his sinecure.

But every stroke that we learn of his

character is destined to be harmoniously inconsistent. In the two large indigested quartos which contain Garrick's letters, comes a glimpse of light; but that glimpse is as characteristic as could be hoped for. Garrick had met him, and had taken advantage of the opportunity to ask his aid for the Calas family, Voltaire's protegés, which the flighty Charles readily promised; a promise he forgot almost as soon as made. The actor had to write to remind him, but Mr. Townshend, busy with a hundred other things, never answered him; which put Roscius in a dilemma, as he had set his subscriber's name down in his printed list, and was now clearly afraid that Mr. Townshend, seeing it, would say in his blunt way that he had given no such authority. Would Doctor Brocklesby, wrote Mr. Garrick, in great delicacy, "sound Mr. Charles Townshend?" on this matter.

Looking back now, it is indeed impossible not to sympathize with the fallen Grenville —no minister had a more ungrateful part to play. He, too, had had to encounter the intrigues of favourites and the more secret treachery of his king, but too quixotic to

expect that the head of a strong party in the House, and a successful party, should give way out of mere complacence and loyal obsequiousness. The king's friends gave out that he had gone so far as to hector and bully the king, and said that he had threatened to fling down the seals at the closet door. But the king himself acquitted him, and said "with emotion," that it was a calumny. But when forced to take back his servants, the king was ungenerous enough to tell him, on being consulted on some appointment, that "anything they proposed to him was no longer *counsel, but what he was to obey.*"

It is not surprising that they had once more tied "down" so slippery a master with the severest conditions; and one of these conditions, affecting Charles Townshend, opens, as will be seen presently, a very curious chapter in the history of intrigue. It was obvious, however, that no ministry could endure long against such odds. Grenville chronicles in his diary the descending scale of "glum" looks, short answers, avoidances, withheld confidences, abrupt and almost rude behaviour on the king's side, which marked the stages of his

downfall.* The king had at last the satisfaction of dismissing him, and Grenville had only the stereotyped and traditional consolation of being told by Mansfield that "*he* only could save the kingdom from *utter ruin, to which without his assistance it would go inevitably.*" This piece of comfort Mr. Grenville inscribes in his diary, with perfect faith in its truth, and we have already seen there were many other statesmen who believed the country irretrievably lost from the instant they were driven from power.

But his own hands were scarcely clean. Associated with that gift to Charles Townshend, I have discovered a stroke of political craft which was no doubt considered a masterpiece of cleverness, and which I will now relate.

When the new Rockingham ministry was being formed, Charles was away down at Adderbury, in genuine hopelessness over the state of things. He was the spirit that every ministry had to try and gain. The bro-

* The first symptom that made him uneasy was a change of style in the little scraps the king sent to him. One of these alarming documents ran: "MR. GRENVILLE, I would have you attend me to-morrow, at two o'clock."

thers were on affectionate terms now, though their quarrels had once been indecently public. One of these scandals had been talked of in town, and Lady Townshend had with infinite difficulty smoothed matters down and got them to meet at a reconciliation dinner. The dinner passed off quietly, and harmony was restored. They separated, but no sooner had George got home than he sat down and wrote Charles a furious letter, an outrageous letter, that opened the breach afresh. Charles was now watching the crisis half languidly, half eagerly. His own absence from town is sufficient proof of his indifference. His brother was in town. Both were in very ill odour at Court, and Charles, who was as sensitive as he was impulsive, suffered acutely under this treatment. For, as has been shown, personal royal favour was absolutely *necessary* to political success. Royal partiality alone might ensure it, royal indifference was the least amount of countenance necessary for advancement; but in the face of royal enmity it became hopeless. Down at his country place, then, Charles was brooding over his treatment, and speculating what could be the motive.

But during these changes a mysterious hint had been given him, and good authority had hinted to him that his nomination to the Pay Office had been *forced on the king:* forced on him too at the time he had been ignominiously obliged to swallow such bitter conditions by Grenville, and "in company with *other affronts.*" Charles indignantly denied the fact; his promotion to that place had been long negotiated for and long promised. It was a matter entirely between Grenville and himself. "Then," said his informant, yet more mysteriously, "both you and Lord Townshend *have been deceived*, and if ever you return to the closet this *matter will be the first to be cleared up.*"

The person who made this communication was one of influence and authority, and the mystery that so "intrigued" Charles was this: Grenville, knowing his uncertainty and the probability that even the next session might find the man he had secured with the rich bribe of the Pay Office actually opposing him, artfully introduced among the conditions that were forced on the king one for the dismissal of Fox and the appointment of Charles in his

room. There was no reason for such a step, the king had no special dislike to Charles; but it was admirably calculated to make him share in the odium of the whole business. The result would, of course, be the proscription of Townshend along with his friends, and he would be *driven* to take his lot with them. The artful part of the whole was the concealment of the matter from Charles, who was led to believe he was appointed in the usual course and by the minister's own act.

Nothing could be better, either as regards his statesmanship or his earnest feeling, than his view of the situation. Either the present ministry must be taken back—which seems impossible in the face of the king's prejudices—or a new one formed out of the minority, which seems very difficult; or there must be one out the Scotch element and "country gentlemen," *i.e.*, Tories; "which," he says, "may be the final necessary measure, but which would be offensive." In truth, this last was what he was hankering after. For there he saw strength—that is, royal favour—no divisions, and the Scotch "thane" was his relation. "In the meantime," he goes on, in a

despondency quite sincere—for he was writing to his brother—"in what distress is the king, and what condition are these kingdoms! Is this dilemma paralleled in the history of our times? Surely things hasten in this embarrassed country to some sudden revolution! I am sincerely sorry to see it." He then makes a confession, which, again considering the quarter to which it was addressed, we may accept as perfectly sincere, for brothers scarcely act with each other. "I desire not to make any advantage of the confusion for myself, *for late experience has deadened my ambition by lessening my confidence. I only wish to have misconceptions, unjustly entertained of one of us, fully removed.*" There is something almost pathetic in these words. "I seek not power," he went on; "if the tide bring me any communication or overture, I shall decline every advance until I have seen you; that we who acted so honourably in the last instance, may be the same men, in the same manner, upon every future occasion. *Reject all reports of me* which are not *from* me. The arrangements reported had no authority. *I fear the king's health suffers from a sense of his situa-*

tion." This was the idea unconsciously in his head.

But so soon as the next day, Lord Rockingham himself, the new Prime Minister, came down in person to invite Mr. Townshend to be his Chancellor of the Exchequer. The interview was most curious and characteristic.

They were eager to have him as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He answered with characteristic boldness "he would not be such to any man living"—though almost, as a matter of course, a year was to see him in that office. They then "threw out the seals" to him. He spoke with unreserved confidence, drew for Townshend "a map of the Court," and gave "an etching of the new ministry." Townshend met the negotiator with wonderful skill and tact. He lamented the wretched state of the country, and also the coldness with which he himself had been received at his late visit to Court. He pretended a sort of surprise at finding his poor abilities now "so necessary," when only a short time before he was of no account whatever. From such uncertainty in their treatment of

him, he hinted to Lord Rockingham, there was no security for the future; and he put off all negotiations until this fickleness was explained. He thus gained time, and sent away an express to his brother to prepare him, saying that it was necessary "we should have some consultation, and be *prepared for the day of application to us both;*" and then adds his own wise forecasting of the situation—"*In my opinion,*" he seems to whisper his brother, "*the plan has not the show of much stability or necessary strength.*"

When he alluded to the "coldness at Court," which had so surprised him, Lord Rockingham said with meaning, that "he had been deceived." And yet he had no idea that there was any truth in what was insinuated; for he wrote to his brother as to the effect of this rumour in alienating Pitt also, "from a matter *which he has heard represented falsely and as a condition imposed* upon the king after the return of the ministry, *which you know it was not.*" However, he would not give Lord Rockingham any decided answer. He told his brother—writing to him an account of the day—that

the real objection was, "there was no stability" —as indeed there was not, save behind the royal chair. And then he added, with great acuteness, that "Pitt's private approbation would bring no strength, and will be for ever disputed," an excellent comment on the suspicious value of what is called independent support. But then, on the other hand, "was it delicate to disobey the crown at such a minute of distraction?"

CHAPTER XVI.

ROYAL DUPLICITY.

As a matter of course, everything was now explained to the king; and the clouds which lay between Charles and the royal mind were happily dispelled. To Lord Townshend his Majesty spoke very earnestly about getting his brother to take the Exchequer, to which Lord Townshend answered with some artful bluntness, which could not have been unpalatable. He could hardly, he said, persuade his brother to do what he himself disapproved of. That he had been induced by his Majesty to oppose the very men his Majesty was now taking into his service; and *that he should disgrace himself by supporting them.* This was plain speaking, but he knew well that the

king's sympathies were no more with the present advisers than with the last. Charles found all coldness removed in that quarter. His Majesty sent for him, and begged him in person to take office; but Charles, with more steadiness than one would have expected from him, declined. He was wise enough to discern the lutestring character of the project. When the levées came on, Charles was seen going into the closet, where he was kept a few minutes. But the old Duke of Newcastle, to whom all administrations—lutestring or good stout Dowlas—were one, had again forced himself into the ranks as Lord Privy Seal; and it was remarked that at the levée he was not only caressed by the king more than any one else, but was actually kept an hour in the closet. When we think of the degrading picture of him in his downfall, given some chapters back, when he was universally despised and "tabooed," there must have been some power of intrigue in this old veteran to weather successfully so many reverses. Whatever ragged regiment of a ministry could be got together, the "irrepressible" duke contrived to push himself into the ranks, and hobbling to the

front, shouldered his political crutch once more.

Yet the two Townshends, though convinced of Grenville's treachery, could not forbear a little of the intrigue which was then the element in all things. Lord Townshend went to Grenville to tell him of the tempting offers that had been made to Charles; and insinuated that his declining the Chancellorship was a sacrifice made for Grenville. This was too much, and the fallen minister coolly declined to accept it in that view, saying that Mr. Townshend ought to take whatever he was offered, if consistent with his honour or advantage.

The new honour, though of such feeble materials, was to have a longer tenure than he fancied and prophesied. Meanwhile, as he looks on at its struggles, chafing and discontented with his splendid place of 7000*l.* a year, his oddities were turning up in private circles, and the stories of the old patterns were going round.

He was always gay and always ready. What was uppermost and on his tongue he allowed to go free without a second's reflection. It was, as it were, blustered out;

and only that people dreaded his light scimitar, and guerilla style of fighting, these free speeches must have brought him into trouble and disgrace. Standing close by Mansfield in the House of Lords, who was delivering some of the constitutional platitudes of which he was so fond, he turned brusquely to a friend and said, loud enough to be heard by the speaker, "What a damned crane-necked fellow it is!" Once a member was making his maiden speech in the House, when Charles asked who he was. He was told he was the celebrated Mr. Harris, of Salisbury, who had written a book on genius, and a book on virtue. "And what the devil brings him here?" said Charles in his impatient way; "I am sure he will find neither one nor the other in the House of Commons." This answer Mr. Malone quotes to show that he often "laid traps" for his "good things," and sprang, as it were, the well-known "question detached to lead in the ambuscade of the ready-made joke." But this is not likely. This is about the poorest specimen of his wit, and the occasion would have been suggestive to much inferior intellects.

He was never so wholly possessed by the rough spirit of politics, as not to find space for reading and literature. In Dodsley's collection —that strange hospital which contains both the healthy and the weakly, side by side—are to be found some poetical efforts of his, which, in such a mass, are difficult to identify, as but few of the "hands" have their names attached. But he knew men of letters, and Akenside addressed to him two warm but slightly pedantic odes, lamenting how the dust and heat of battle abstracted him so much from the calmer retreats of study and literature.

"Say Townshend," begins one of those, in that colloquial fashion once popular, and which has an air almost of burlesque:

"Say Townshend, what can London boast,
To pay thee for the pleasure lost,
The health to-day resigned?

O knew'st thou how the balmy air,
The sun, the azure heavens prepare
To heal thy languid frame,
No more would noisy courts engage,
In vain would lying faction's rage
Thy sacred leisure claim."

He then alludes to that well-known "enlivening tongue," and his habits of industry:

> "Thee, Townshend, not the arms
> Of slumbering Ease, nor Pleasure's rosy chain
> Were destined to detain."

And the early friend was not afraid, under the disguise of forecasting a bright future, to hint at the imperfections but too well known in the volatile Charles:

> "O Townshend, thus may Time, the judge severe,
> Instruct my happy tongue of thee to tell,
> And when I speak of one to freedom dear,
> For planning wisely and for acting well;
> Of one whom glory loves to own,
> Who still by liberal means alone,
> Hath liberal ends pursued."

It was said, however, that notwithstanding this poetical fervour, a coldness set in between the poet and statesman, an example which Boswell uses as a sort of illustration, in one of the Johnson discussions, when the great moralist laid down as a chief cause of estrangement between early friends, the rising to power and fortune of one of the parties. Mr. Croker, indeed, doubts this coldness, as Akenside was as much below Townshend in their early days as he continued to be later.

But it must be recollected that Townshend had attained to power and to position, where he had a certain patronage, and might have neglected to exercise it. The tranquil poet, too, was scarcely of the material suited to the statesman, and the gay Charles, who made promises only to forget them, was likely enough to have cast over all such ballast, as his balloon rose. Besides, Boswell speaks of it as a matter accepted and notorious.

In that same delightful company his jesting powers were once debated, and Dr. Johnson was appealed to, to decide. He said he could only mention what he had heard from Mr. Fitzherbert, that in a certain party of pleasure to the country, he and Mr. Townshend went down in the same chaise, but it was settled Charles should take back another companion; "and," said Fitzherbert sarcastically, "in this way the same jokes will serve you going and returning;" an insinuation of but little value, for it was notorious that of all men in the world, Charles did not carry his jests potted or preserved, as it were, but was the most natural and spontaneous of jesters.

There are some points of character in which

he seems a curious anticipation of Sheridan; in nothing so much as in that broad reckless statement which in another man would be called plainly by an uglier name, but which in these two half eccentrics became a sort of rodomontade. Thus, when Hume was in London, in 1759, with the whole town talking about his History, he was greatly mortified to hear that Mr. Charles Townshend was going about, saying that his History was full of gross blunders as to facts—that he had consulted the journals of the House, and found his opinion confirmed. He besides gave out that Dyson, the clerk of the House, had made the same discoveries. He at once got a friend to communicate with the latter, who denied the whole business, and said he had never even spoken on the matter to Mr. Townshend. Hume adds, with all the bitterness of wounded vanity, "I have heard of Mr. Townshend extolling and decrying me as the humour bites. He is, perhaps, angry with me at present, because I did not wait on him." Three years before, however, he *had* waited on him twice; and had found out that "he passed for being the cleverest fellow in England."

The object of his visit was to try and get him to make Adam Smith tutor to the young Duke of Buccleuch. Adam Smith eventually became the tutor,—not through Hume's interest,—and was bored to death by his office.

In one of the American debates growing out of the repeal of Grenville's Stamp Act, had appeared that famous "Mr. O'Bourke," of whom London men wrote to their friends that here was "an Irishman," who by his parts was astonishing them all. It is characteristic of Walpole's prejudices that, when setting Burke and Townshend side by side, he should actually almost give the palm to the latter. We grant the artificial and almost laboured character of Burke's wit and illustrations, and can conceive how "fresh" seemed all Townshend's gifts, by way of contrast. The fact is, Walpole was perfectly dazzled by the flashing qualities of the man, whom he described in one of his happiest sketches as one "who had studied nothing accurately or with attention," yet "seemed to create knowledge instead of searching for it," with a wit "so abundant that in him it seemed a loss of time to think. *He had but to speak, and all he said*

was new, natural, and uncommon." An exquisite charm, hints of which many in their own experience have seen, but cannot describe so graphically. What a tribute Burke in his own noble language could pay to this meteor will be shown later.

From this time up to the end of his life he behaved with extraordinary uncertainty. He was disgusted with the present state of things, and was heard going about indiscreetly, saying that "he was ready to give up his place to the king,"—that if Lord Bute would stand out and not flinch, he would carry on the administration at the Treasury himself, and even "kiss hands to-morrow with Lord Bute, if the king wished." But he insisted, as his *sine quâ non*, that Lord Holland (whom he had thrust out of his place) should be made a Privy Councillor. All this time it was said that Lord Holland declined positively to have such an honour thrust on him. So had he insisted in behalf of his client, Burrell, almost before he was himself appointed, and so, on this occasion, had he been making these fanciful stipulations before he had obtained power.

Once more, then, in the agonies of dissolution, the Rockingham ministry had again turned to Townshend, and renewed their tempting offers, rising in their magnificence the more he appeared to be disinclined to accept.

To be thus pressed was something very complimentary to his talents. He went about in his usual inconsiderate way, talking loudly, and telling all the steps of the negotiation. Their offers, if his account can be accepted, seemed almost desperate in their urgency, and the conversation between the negotiators highly dramatic. He did not care, he said, "to be of the party, when all the ability of the House would be against the administration." He gave out that they had come to him with the seals, *and a peerage*, an additional bribe, which he said was "worse and worse," as he was too poor to support a title, and too young to *retire into an hospital.* They tried him with the Secretaryship of Plantations, which he declined; and then they broke into angry expostulation with him, saying that "it was very extraordinary such offices should go a-begging, and that if the present

system broke up, *it would be his fault;*" on which the true Townshend spirit flamed out, and he told them defiantly that "he meant to keep his place, and that they durst not take it from him if they could, and could not if they durst, which he hoped would be sufficiently explicit." Is not this delightful! It was not indeed to be expected that even so inconsiderate a political seaman as he was, would take his passage on board a sinking ship. At last, as he was merely going about pointing to weak places in the ministry, ridiculing them privately and in public, Lord Rockingham naturally lost all patience with his airs, and told him very plainly that he should be *forced to take office* where he should be active and of some use, instead of being indolent, and perhaps insolent, or he should be dismissed at once. It was wonderful to think of a man being thus coaxed, and bribed, and flattered into the highest offices, and when that failed, to be threatened and intimidated into a secretaryship. Yet both courses equally failed, and Charles spoke truly when he said they *durst* not take his place from him.

Before this he had got into a warm alterca-

tion with Grenville, in which as usual the wit and indifference of the one—two admirable arms in combination—were more than a match for the "tediousness and passion" of the other.

At last, in the early part of 1766, by means of intrigues about them, and from internal weakness and dissensions, the Rockingham government began to show signs of giving way. The Duke of Grafton left them; the king was against them, and it must be said, had dealt with them in a very unworthy, unkinglike fashion. So at last the great—and indeed the only—state physician of the day, the pensioned, and as yet untitled Mr. Pitt, was called in. He had, indeed, been called in many times before, but had refused to prescribe. Now, having accepted the medical duty, he began that mysterious series of political coquetries—those extraordinary retirements and voluntary imprisonments, which were the wonder of his day, as it has been of our own; and which, though partly excusable on the ground of ill-health, seem to be traceable to a sort of insanity as the only rational explanation.

He now felt that his turn had come. He had exhibited that most rare and profitable of all political virtues—a regulated *self-denial* and abstinence, that will decline office again and again because the proper moment has not come, and because it is merely office, and not power. Each refusal makes him the more *recherché*, and the mere reputation of such a disinclination is a fresh demand on public admiration. He had been applied to again, for his aid was all important. But knowing, like all the world, where the true fountain of honour and source of strength lay, he declined to receive any overture, except from the king himself.

Now the moment was come: the fruit appeared to be ripe. But, as will be seen, he had miscalculated, not the power of his enemies, but his own strength. The faithless king, who only a few months before had declared that such a step would be "personally disgraceful to himself," now gave him his entire confidence, and loaded him with honours. Then was accepted that Chatham peerage, which, as regards his popularity, was about as fatal an honour as the shirt of Nessus.

Now came the distribution of offices, which he allotted to his followers and allies with the haughtiness of a dictator. To one was sent an abrupt message, "that he might have such an office, if he pleased;" to another, "that such an office was still vacant;" to a third, "that he must take that particular office, or go without one." This ungraciousness repelled many: roughness in turning out some of the older Whigs alienated many more. The result was that he had to form a weak ministry, which was indeed no more than Chatham himself; and I think there can be no manner of doubt that a great part of his subsequent extraordinary behaviour, his retirements and mysterious shrinking from duty, was chagrin at the discovery of this mistake, and annoyance at having committed himself too soon. But if he could be insolent, there were others who could meet him on the same terms. Lord Rockingham gave him a rebuff which must have been a severe lesson. Pitt went himself, in his well-known chair, to call on him. As he was asking at the door, Lord Rockingham came home, and then Pitt's chair was carried into the hall. But presently "a common foot-

man" came down with word that his lordship was out. This marked insult was soon over the town. Lord Rockingham gave out that as a private man he would always resent Pitt's contemptuous usage. Pitt, giving his version, said that he was determined never to be angry again, but if this had happened twenty years ago, Lord Rockingham should have heard of it, for he would not have taken such treatment from the first duke in England. This affair seems to have been greatly enjoyed.* There was a loss of prestige even from this little matter. His difficulties grew every moment; and he found himself in presence of three parties—the Butes, Bedfords, and Rockinghams. The Earl of Chatham, no longer in the House of Commons, could scarcely be a match for all. Though we may admire the sort of gallantry with which a single spirit, that justly feels itself the master of the inferior natures about it, fights a haughty battle; and even the arro-

* Writing to the Duke of Grafton, Pitt glosses over his being admitted into the hall. "I found his lordship going out, so I was not let in. I meant to pay a visit of respect, as a private man, to Lord Rockingham, and had I found his lordship, to have told him, as Pitt to Lord Rockingham, what the king's fixed intentions were."

gance with which the consciousness of this superiority colours all things, still experience has fatally shown that the struggle is not equal, and that the meaner elements can at least find their revenge in combination. It is like Yorick, and those whom he made the butts of his wit, but who, by uniting their forces, overmatched the jester at last. But in such instances, where surpassing genius is thus overpowered, there is an appeal left to the greater constituency outside, who will soon restore the balance.

By the middle of July he was busy with this task; kept the whole nation in suspense, and Horace Walpole in town, to see the issue. The Grenville section were happily got rid of. Elements of strength were found in Lord Shelburne and the Duke of Grafton, and then Charles Townshend was sent for. He arrived, it was said, "exulting." No wonder Pitt was a tower of strength; such political "backing" there was not in the kingdom. This was about the 21st of July. But on the next evening a letter was brought to him from the dictator, haughty and laconic. "Sir," it ran, "you are of too great importance not to be in

a responsible place. I intend to propose you to the king to-morrow for Chancellor of the Exchequer, and must desire to have your answer to-night by nine o'clock.

This offer was almost insulting from its haughtiness, for it tacitly *ordered* him to accept 2700*l.* a year instead of 7000*l.*; and hinted that he was to lose his last post if he dared to decline the offer. And yet it was considered by those who knew Townshend well, to have been about the best shape in which such an offer could have been made. Coming in such a decided shape it intimidated him; the requiring to have an answer by nine showed a sort of indifference in the great man, and that there were others kept *in petto*; and finally, there was an implied compliment that he was the man for the situation.

It was said that he was thrown into the most comic distress and indecision. All that evening, as it drew on to nine, he sat at home in his night-gown, saw everybody that came —showed everybody that came Pitt's letter— canvassed its meaning, and sent off expresses for his brother and the Duke of Grafton; and, still in his night-gown, ran to the window at

the sound of every coach that passed. The time, however, was too short for him to communicate with his brother, and he had to write his answer before nine o'clock came. The answer he was obliged to write was a sort of rueful acceptance, putting the matter on his duty to the king. He had refused to take his Paymastership without the king's approbation, and, "on the same principle," resigned it now, according to his Majesty's will. This was hinting pretty plainly how his wishes ran, and but for the stern mind that was dictating to him, he would decline the high but unprofitable office.

Though every political knot in town knew of his embarrassment, Horace Walpole (who, though in Paris, had picked up a fair outline of the negotiation) does not seem to have heard of this first acceptance, but represents him as suing for leave to remain. He had not heard either of "a conversation" which Pitt had with Mr. Townshend before sending his imperious ultimatum.

He would seem, however, to have followed up this letter by an earnest request that he would be allowed to stay, and possibly to his

surprise, the great chief consented. Perhaps the latter knew who he was dealing with. These vacillations became quite comic. No sooner had he obtained what he wished than he repented. Then he began to think of the captaincies now being given away, and of the glittering trappings of office, and of the glory, unsubstantial as it was, of command. After all it is to his credit that he should have given way to this temptation. Before two days had passed over, he had begged of Mr. Pitt that he might be allowed to change his mind. The other coldly replied that "the place was full" —he intended to keep in Dowdeswell. The more he was refused, the more Charles Townshend seemed to become sensible of the prize he had lost. He renewed his petition, it is said, with tears. Pitt was obdurate.

This was on Thursday the 25th of July. That night he posted to the Duke of Grafton, as leader in the new ministry, for whom he professed a sort of affection. With him this curious actor tried a new part—affected to be resigned—seemed to think it was hopeless to think of changing Pitt's determination. At least he quite impressed the duke with this

idea. He owned that Mr. Pitt had thought of him the first, and that he had not wished to lose his place. He approved of the reasons given him—the appearance of inconsistency it would impart to the new councils. But he conveyed to the duke that he longed for the office as much as ever, but did not wish "to appear to solicit it too violently." The duke listened, but did not propose to him to see Mr. Pitt again, "lest he might look on himself as too *recherché*." Thus both were acting—acting in the great man, but Charles was the better actor of the two. The duke wrote the whole interview. "So I told him," he says, "I left you in the same way of thinking."

Next day the duke received a letter from Mr. Townshend in the same key as their conversation, and dated "noon." (In these political crises, events are dated by hours, not by days.) It set out with professions of "inseparable attachment to you and to Mr. Pitt," and then owned, in the same resigned fashion, that on the whole it was "possibly as well for the public that things remain as they are," and agreed with Mr. Pitt as to the dangers

"of sudden variations in things once communicated." The duke enclosed this to Pitt, as perhaps it was intended it should be. Charles then posted to Court to have an audience of the king, and on the way would seem to have changed his mind once more. Pitt had been there only that very morning, and had told the whole story; so the king was prepared for a personal appeal to himself. His astonishment was great when Mr. Townshend announced to him his intention of remaining at the Pay Office. No doubt there was pique and a little art in this—taking Pitt at his word, and knowing that he would thus become *recherché*. The king said it must be a mistake, as Mr. Pitt had just told him only that morning of his desire to be Chancellor. The other then began to show his cards—perhaps thought himself now *recherché*—and began to make terms, as it were. He seemed uncertain; said if he took the office at all, he must give out it was by his Majesty's commands, and not his own choice; that he was losing 7000*l.* a year, and hoped for an indemnification of some kind. It is a fresh testimony to the wonderful abilities of this

man, and to the degree they were prized, that these freaks and spasms were tolerated at all.

By half-past four that day the king had written with his own hand to Pitt, to tell him of his singular behaviour. Before night he had received an answer. Walpole had even heard that Townshend had told the king that Pitt had again *pressed* him to be Chancellor—a fiction quite harmless, for he must have known that the king would tell; but a hint quite significant of his vanity, and the wild way of talking it led him into. Pitt wrote back the same night what in reality amounted to this: that the vacillating genius must be *made* to stand by what he had proposed himself, and take office. This the king answered from Richmond Lodge, at "fifteen minutes past eight" the next morning, quite adopting Pitt's view, that "Mr. Townshend must be obliged to put in execution what he so clearly expressed to you as his wish." Indeed, the only reason his Majesty wrote was, that the minister "might be apprised of his fluctuating;" on receipt of which Pitt sent him his orders, couched in a "friendly letter," which

on the same day Townshend answered by an acceptance. He was obliged to strike, and wrote with a feigned alacrity about his master's "friendly letter," and about what he *recommended*. The motives put forward by the minister he found quite "satisfactory," but the wish of the king and his own personal regard for the Duke of Grafton would be sufficient to determine him. He must have chafed sorely as he wrote. On receipt of this letter, Pitt sent off an express to Richmond, and the same night received a letter in reply from the king, dated "thirty-five minutes past ten." "It gives me much pleasure that Mr. Charles Townshend has at length clearly accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer." And thus this curious little negotiation ended. Surely never was such an office forced on such a subject before. No wonder that Walpole said, "with such silly duplicity" did he struggle for a rank which he might without trouble have secured before all competitors. Pitt, he said, was only amused by his extravagance.

Poor Dowdeswell, Charles's old schoolfellow, was down at Chelsea, dining with a friend,

when the letter of dismissal was brought in to him. Promises of compensation were held out to him; but he wrote back bitterly that he was "extremely glad that Mr. Charles Townshend had accepted his office, for as it has been offered to him, it is in every respect better that he *should take it, than that I should continue to hold it.*" Charles himself wrote to him to say how "concerned he was to find himself commanded by the king to accept the office—not from its labour and difficulties, but at being the successor of a friend." This was no flourish, for in his interview with the king, he had actually mentioned his disinclination to be the means of ousting a friend. But Dowdeswell was deeply aggrieved, declined all compensation, and later had his revenge—defeating, not the Government, but his friend Charles, on the land tax question.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GREAT INDIA QUESTION.

On this elevation, it was a pardonable vanity that made him go at once, and sit to Sir Joshua; and at the seat of the Townshends is to be seen his full length portrait, in his *new robes of office.* And yet, in those days, the office had not reached to the dignity or importance to which the abilities of skilful modern financiers was to lift it. The dealing with the national balance was a simple affair, or, at least, the responsibility gave small anxiety to those who so carelessly accepted it, and so recklessly and inefficiently supported it. Indeed, the sums to be dealt with would seem manageable enough, the "supply" being generally about seven to eight millions, and

the budget being eked out by such mean expedients as a lottery and the present of a couple of rich "French prizes" from the king. But even with this simplicity there used to be some shameful exhibitions of incompetency in the House. Men of pleasure, like Sir Francis Dashwood, used to flounder through the figures, and boast that posterity would say "this was the worst Chancellor England ever had." Any journeyman was good enough for the office, and the series of names—Lee, Lyttelton, Dowdeswell, Dashwood, and Charles Townshend—do not make up a brilliant roll. But Townshend was, perhaps, the most fitted of the series, for he had trained himself to figures, and such rude political economy as there was in that day, in the office of Trade and Plantations, and had made a sort of *specialité* of such questions.

But not until more than a century later came the time when the stiff and formal science of political figures was to be made attractive, and even ornamented and overlaid with a florid tracery and elegant foliage, to become pleasant to the eye and intelligent to

the common mind. It was reserved for the nineteenth century, and for the opening of the latter half of the nineteenth century, to discover an enchanter who could change the grim ogres of finance into agreeable familiars; and, more marvellous still, hold a vast assembly spell-bound for five hours, while he told the story of trade, and taxes, and duties, and of the rise and fall of imports and exports, making those who listened, and the greater crowd who were to read hereafter, fancy they were hearing and reading a Persian tale.

Yet the experienced in politics might well shake their heads, and augur the worst from such a mixture as now made up the ministry. All sorts of fatal elements were existing in the council room—pride, vanity, imperiousness, contempt. The only chance of safety was in the iron hand of the chief. Burke described the composition with whimsical imagery: "He (Lord Chatham) put together a ministry so chequered and speckled: a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed: a cabinet so variously inlaid: such a piece of diversified mosaic: such a tesselated pavement without cement, here a bit of

black stone, there a bit of white: patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans, Whigs and Tories, treacherous friends and open enemies, that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsecure to stand on." The new allies were even strangers to each other's faces; and their meetings at the council table were comically described. "I am of such a board." "O, I beg your pardon; I am so and so, and so and so."

Still Chatham—whose very name made the town wits turn grave—could have kept up at least a show of decency or of common subordination. His will, his genius, could do wonders; and awe even the vagrant mind of Charles Townshend. At the very first council the latter attended—they were then held at night—the earl dwelt so lucidly and all but magnificently on the politics of Europe and on his own plans, that Charles had to own to the Duke of Grafton, who brought him home in his coach, what "inferior animals" he made them all appear, and until that moment he had never fully realized his vast superiority.

How the head and maker of this ministry

behaved—how the driver of this political team flung down the reins, and sulked, and shut himself up almost as soon as he got them into harness—is well known. A more ill-assorted and discordant set of yokefellows could scarcely have been got together. But one driver in the kingdom could have made them go together harmoniously. There were questions, too, coming on, which required the greatest skill. Of these the most remarkable and dangerous were the American difficulties and the delicate affair of the India Company and its powers. And with such rocks ahead, which required the nicest skill to escape, the great minister—now become Earl of Chatham—was to shrink away to Bath, and whine and moan over his nerves and ailments.

Not yet, however, had it become a sort of hypochondriac affection with him; nor had he excited the wonder and even pity of his political friends.

Yet for this behaviour Pitt has not unnaturally been dealt with as playing a bit of comedy; or as giving way to an eccentricity that verged on lunacy. Of the two, the ex-

planation is nearer to the last, though the last is far removed from the truth. Any one who turns over the Chatham papers, even in the most careless way, will see that he was all his life racked by physical suffering, and that latterly this continuance of pain wrought upon his nerves, which made him shrink morbidly from the least excitement. The result of such was to work his blood up into a fever, bring on miserable nights of physical agony and mental flutter. These things are set out in his private letters to Lady Chatham; but the public could not be expected to understand what seemed so strange to them, and it was set down to a sort of histrionic gout and to "political sickness."

At the very outset, he and his Chancellor of the Exchequer started with different views on this India question.

The Company were then a set of greedy and rapacious nabobs, making enormous profits, and taking a haughty and independent attitude towards the public and the Government. Lawyers doubted whether they had any title to their exorbitant pretensions; and this was Pitt's more far-seeing view of their

position. Yet he saw that he could not trust entirely to his Chancellor, and had secured Beckford's aid, as that of an independent member, who could move for an inquiry and papers, and thus be a wholesome check on his lieutenant. This was an exceptional proceeding, and almost an open slight; and Lord Stanhope, in his excellent history, seems to think there is colour for the insinuation that in consequence of some trivial bedchamber appointment, Chatham and his Chancellor were on cool terms.*

But it will be seen by a discussion on the details that later took place between them, that Townshend not only secured the real management, but the actual originating of the plan to be pursued, which he carried out in opposition to Pitt; and that Beckford was a mere skirmisher, who was to harass the Company by general attacks.

When the Cabinet met early in December to discuss this question, Chatham was not himself present, and the discordant elements declared themselves. Townshend and "Jerry Dyson" openly disapproved of Beck-

* History of England, 3rd edit. 1853, vol. v. p. 175.

ford's course, and the council broke up in confusion. Pitt was appealed to on the following day, and rebuked the mutineers in his loftiest tone.

Townshend was for a basis of dealing with the directors leniently, and treating with them; Pitt for rigorously snatching their dictatorship from them. If it was to be narrowed "to the ideas of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, the whole becomes a farce, and the ministry a ridiculous phantom." Dyson, it seems, took part with Townshend, and very likely from interested motives. "Mr. Dyson's behaviour," said the sick premier loftily, "cannot be acquiesced in;" and then pronounced an awful fiat: "Mr. C. Townshend's *fluctuations and incurable weakness* cannot comport with his remaining in that critical office. Your grace will not, I trust, wonder at the pain I feel for the king's service and personal ease, as well as for the redemption of a nation within reach of being saved at once by a kind of gift from heaven; and all marred and thrown away by fatal weaknesses, co-operating with the most *glaring fatuity*. *What possible objection* fit to be listened to can be

made to bringing the revenues in India before the House? For my own part I shall wash my hands of the whole business after that event, in case there be not a full inquiry."

As he would see no one, they debated it between Bath and London by letter. Charles almost as a matter of course took the part of the directors against his own colleagues, and mistrusted them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had talked with them, believed in all their promises of reform, and wrote eagerly to his master in their behalf. They were perfectly submissive; they would do everything. Pitt was not to be taken in, and wrote back coldly that he was glad to see even "the dawn" of some fair and honourable conduct on the part of those men; but that "he waited anxiously for the more perfect day." He was ill and worried; but by the next comes a long and laborious justification of those men from Charles—perfectly uncalled for, as Pitt had given up the point—then adding, that as regarded his opinion, "perhaps I may have thought *more than others of a sounder judgment than mine*," that the only safe

policy to be followed in this question was an amicable one. Pitt, with irony, said that he was "sorry any words of mine should *give you the trouble of justifying* the motion of the Court of Directors." Pitt reminded him that he did not mean to dispute the point, and that such justification was not necessary. This is highly characteristic. Charles's restless spirit could not endure inferiority even in argument, and though he knew that Pitt was suffering agonies of mind and body, he wished to have the "last word." Pitt's heart was indeed in the arrangement of this great Indian question. He did not believe in the professions of those merchant satraps, and though he seemed to give way for peace sake to his lieutenant, we can see what his real earnest views were in a few words. "I need not tell you," he said, in a fine strain, "how entirely this transcendant subject possesses my heart and fixes my thoughts. I am rejoiced at a dawn of reason and equity in the general Court, so long delivered up to the grossest delusion of a mistaken self-interest, shutting their eyes to the elementary principles of justice." He gave way to Mr.

Townshend's view, so far as waiting to see what proposal they would make; but still their terms were so general, that he advised the greatest caution. And this profound forecast was to be fully justified.

And yet, without being uncharitable, it must be said this persistent defence of an opulent company was thought strange at the time. It was whispered, or rather openly talked of, that some of these freaks on the India question were connected with jobbing in the India funds. "What! a Chancellor of the Exchequer do a thing of that sort! O, my dear sir," writes his admirer, Walpole, "his character cannot be lowered." He had first, it seems, cried up the Company's rights to raise the stock — had then sold out. This, however, seems only a theory made to square with his behaviour, but there is not a particle of proof. Another story was, that at a dinner given to the City moneyed men to discuss the loan, he attended, and at the end, when the terms had been settled, and they were mentioning the names of friends whom they wished to be put down as subscribers, it was said that the Chancellor had hastily pre-

tended to cast up some hurried notes he had been making on a scrap of paper, announced that the list was full, and hurried away. In reality it was not full, and there was said to have been a large margin over, which he allotted to himself as a sort of bonus. Chatham moaning and "honing" over his nerves and his gout, could only inveigh against his Chancellor. "I wish," he wrote to the Duke of Grafton after receipt of Townshend's arguments, "I could see cause to express my thanks to the good genius of the Company. I will say but a few words on their captious and preposterous paper. . . . . On this self-evident state of the thing, I am forced to declare I have no hopes from the transaction."

Not yet, however, had he altogether fallen into this monomania. It was known everywhere that, with these great questions requiring immediate and careful consideration, that "nothing is done." On Conway was unfairly thrown the whole burden of carrying on the Government and defending Government measures in the Lower House. Yet he could not get admittance to the head of the

ministry, whose advice, even if he would do nothing himself, would be of some service.

Meanwhile, with its chief away from London, the ill-assorted ministerial family began to fall out among themselves. For Grafton and Shelburne Charles began to exhibit open contempt; Lord North he openly called "Blubbery North;" while the two first noblemen indignantly resented his airs and his arrogance. With the January of the new year, the duke began a series of complaints to Chatham, all referring to Mr. Townshend, and which read almost amusingly. Charles was as dilatory as he was headstrong; and by the 21st no progress had been made in the treaty.

It was likely that the cunning directors would rise in their terms when they found there were no signs of their open enemy coming up. But no such hints would move him. The duke then spoke more plainly. "Your Lordship *must have observed a peevish cast in some of our late councils,*" and he apprehended that serious dangers and difficulties would arise unless he came. Lord Chatham answered that he would try and

be in town in a few days. Charles, meanwhile, to the amusement of Lord Chesterfield and others, was taking all the airs of a prime minister. He was playing all sorts of antics with great questions. There were men like Beckford, honest, independent, and capable members, deeply interested in the almost awful importance of the great Indian administration, to whom such levity gave deep concern. Beckford was moving for papers on the matter, when Charles came to him, assuring him that everything was on the eve of settlement, and would be arranged in a day or two, and thus got him to put off his motion. In a day or two the Chancellor of the Exchequer was dazzling the House with magnificent Indian plans, saying what a splendid revenue he would raise out of that country, and what a state of prosperity he would raise the Company to, by the concessions *he* intended making it, so that their stock rose five or six per cent. in a few hours. No wonder Beckford wrote down to Chatham to complain, and that Pitt should be disgusted by his behaviour, but determined to let the matter go on now, "since delay may give room for

the present entangled state of things to determine."

The vanity of Charles had, in fact, so involved matters, that it was now the safest course not to interfere with him. Meanwhile, there were loud complaints from the unfortunate stock-holders, whose property was fluctuating with every hour from the sheer uncertainty.

But the eager Chancellor was busy with other matters, and laid his rash hand on a question scarcely less important. "You are cowards," said Grenville, stopping short in the midst of one of his vigorous financial denunciations; "you dare not tax America. You are afraid of the Americans." "Fear!" answered Townshend from his place. "Cowards! dare not tax America! *I* dare tax America!" This was one of his reckless turns, and it brought the House with him. For the moment Grenville was silenced, then said, "Dare you tax America? I wish to God I could see it!" To which the other answered as impetuously, "I will, I will!"

He then told Grenville that he had *always* approved (!) of the Stamp Act; "only that

the heat made it an improper time to levy it."* His colleagues listened in amazement to this reckless engagement, whose spirit and terms were totally opposed to all their principles. "What he means," wondered the Duke of Grafton, "I cannot conceive. I hear, *from general conversation*, he has a plan for a board of customs in America, and a new levy of tea duties *here*." This *was* actually the Chancellor's plan, which he told to all the world, except to his colleagues. The only remedy for all this confusion, the only chance of restraint, was in the return of the ruling spirit to London. "Let but the gout go," wrote the duke, almost imploringly, "and it will dispel all these difficulties."

His colleagues were confounded and indignant, yet they sat silent: but at the council, on the following evening, they called him to account. His only justification was to turn to Conway, and appeal to him if there was not an overpowering feeling in the House

* Ingersoll, the American delegate—whose account is given in Mr. Forster's "Goldsmith"—supplies a portion of this scene. The last part will be found in a letter of Grafton's to Lord Chatham.

in favour of the proposal. Conway admitted that there was, which was no justification; but Charles's audacity carried him through. Not one had courage to propose having him dismissed.

But the gout would not go—some said, was not allowed to go. The date of arrival was always fixed for the next week, and always put off. Burke, with an imagery borrowed from the Scriptures, and which verged upon profanity, spoke openly of this mysterious seclusion. "But perhaps this House is not the place where our reasons can be of any avail. The *great person* who is to determine in this question may be far above our view: one so immeasurably high, that the greatest abilities," and he pointed to Charles Townshend, "or the most amiable disposition," alluding to Conway, "may not gain access to him—a being before whom thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers, all veil their faces with their wings."

But nothing would do. Everything was turning to worse confusion: he would not stir. It was getting to the middle of February now, and at last the directors condescended to

make a proposal. Indeed they had already taken up the ground of being alarmed at the question of their title being raised, and the chairman had affected to withdraw altogether, and let matters take their course. They were sagacious enough to see there was division in the councils opposed to them, or that they had a powerful friend in the ministry. But this was too much, and they had now come forward with a proposal that Government should pay them 300,000*l.* a year and support their soldiers, with other provisions so outrageously arrogant and extravagant as to excite a storm of disapprobation. And yet the careless Chancellor was telling every one as the reason of his partiality for the Company, that now since the Duchess of Argyll's death, he was a large owner of its stock himself; in which there was not a particle of truth, the duchess not having held any. Not less recklessly had he now begun to make open comments on his chief, much to the delight of the House, to whom he exhibited all his dislikes and humours with the most open candour. He talked "of him, and at him." It was, no doubt, a feeling

of hopeless distrust in the disjointed state of things, that made him so reckless.

Charles Townshend, already repentant, and bitterly digesting the affront of having his office "crammed down his throat," instead of helping Conway, was going about, openly disclaiming all share in the Government. He told everybody that the Manilla ransom, the American and India questions, were all "jus where they were," and that "*he* had nothing to do with them." His brother, Lord Townshend, was anxious to become a marquis, and actually applied for the honour; and Charles, with a pleasant face, told everybody the incidents of the application. How Lord Townshend had written to the Duke of Grafton, to the effect that he had heard marquises were about to be made, and requesting that he might be included in the list. He was coldly answered that the king had it in his intention at some period, but that at present he had not formed any resolution of the kind. Charles was not of a nature to be much affected by this slight on his brother's account, but presently applied, on his own behalf, that his wife, Lady Dalkeith, might be made a

British peeress. The Duke of Grafton, whom the Chancellor regarded with peculiar "affection," but who had written to a friend how "he had been teased," in the late negotiation at the formation of the ministry, bade Mr. Townshend apply to the king himself. The other replied that the king would give him no answer, and refer the business to Pitt, who would secretly advise against such a step. However, not many months later, his wish was granted, and she became Baroness Greenwich.

Meanwhile, Pitt had shown signs of indignation at his lieutenant's behaviour. Conway, his other lieutenant, on whom all the heats and the labour fell, was also disgusted, but, far more unselfish, continued to do what he could. He was weak and gentlemanly; and it was said that Townshend kept working on his sense of injuries, artfully dwelling on the arrogance of Pitt, and secretly advising him to resign; hinting, too, that he himself would do so presently, and thus frightening him with a threat of the whole responsibility. It was charitably insinuated that Charles was piqued because he himself had not the lead of the

House of Commons. It was, indeed, a ministry of selfish jealousies and mistrusts.

In his indiscriminate confidence he ridiculed Chatham to Grenville, complaining bitterly of the way he was treated, protesting if a peerage was refused him in favour of Lady Dalkeith, he would resign; and giving one of his inimitable photographs of the strange Premier and his eccentric seclusion. How he had called again and again: and that in the morning the regular answer was not up; at noon, the earl was taking the air; in the evening, he was resting, and not on any account to be disturbed. Thus all hours became the same.

Lord Charlemont—"the elegant Charlemont"—was in London at this time, and writing to his friend Flood: nothing appears to have struck him so much as the flashing of Charles Townshend. He dazzled the Irish nobleman as he did others. He was in the House when Beckford at last moved on the Indian question, when Charles Townshend got up, stated the matter quite new, disclaimed all offensive pasts, and made a very *artful, conciliating*, able, and eloquent speech

This was the impression on a stranger, and, it will be observed, gives a new idea of his character. Flood said truly, "He is an orator—the rest are speakers."

He threw out a perfect glory of splendid prospects, new arrangements, new plans, by which the resources of India were to be developed to the highest point. There were to be grand concessions and a new policy. The public was dazzled by this singular programme, which he must have known was to have no real existence, and the stocks ran up six per cent. in consequence. Still it was one of his usual surprising performances, which delighted and astonished spectators.

This genius, skilful at everything, had the air of being quite at home with figures and finance.

He brought in his land tax, the main feature of which was fixing it at four shillings instead of three, which in one of his singular flourishes he boasted would open up one of the grandest results in finance yet thought of. This was only one of his flights, and it may be doubted if he knew well what he himself meant. Still Lord Charlemont was

struck with his speech as a masterly performance. "He spoke amazingly on the question." But the country party would not have the additional shilling, and the Chancellor was beaten; the first time, it was noticed, that a ministry had ever been defeated on a money bill, which shows of how little importance a budget was taken to be, beyond being a mere question of routine.

Yet there can be no question that in matters of finance he was beyond his age, and showed statesmanlike qualities of no mean capacity. With time and training he might have ripened into a financier. One hopeful sign of this was his protest against the narrow, partial, one-sided way in which the country's resources were dealt with. He told his colleagues bluntly at a council that he would "do nothing" unless the whole question of the colonial expenditure, the cost of maintenance for the forts and defences of America, were considered on a great plan with a view to reduction. This was a new and statesmanlike view, for hitherto the Chancellor was little more than a public accountant. He went further, and added, almost with insolence, that he should not only

do nothing, but that he should give out to the public that he had no concern in the business, was not responsible, and should make it appear that it was not his fault.

Such language roused even his colleagues. It was too much even for such distracted councils. And it is amusing to find the two deputies, the Duke of Grafton and Lord Shelburne, writing to their chief, with bitter complaints of their colleague's outrageous behaviour. "It appears to me," said the one, "quite impossible that Mr. Townshend can mean to go on in the king's service. His behaviour, on the whole, is such as no cabinet can submit to." "I am really surprised," wrote the other, "at Mr. Charles Townshend's conduct, which really continues excessive on every occasion. His behaviour exceeds belief." It did indeed; every day he was more and more fixed in the conclusion that he was infinitely superior to "creatures like Tommy Walpole," whom he would "disdain to act with." It was a pitiable state of things—a sick and suffering Premier and wrangling subordinates. But the sick Premier, with all his pains and help-

lessness, took the true and patriotic view of the rapacious nabobs, and the rich country they were sacrificing. Yet he would not go to the king, nor would he let one of the ministers come to him. A sort of morbid terror about himself and his nerves made him behave in this extraordinary way. After great importunity, the Duke of Grafton obtained permission once or twice. But the behaviour of Townshend now moved him to action, and becoming morbidly anxious about this question, he at last posted to London. He arrived in Bond Street at the beginning of March. Only a day after this event, Charles—as *entêté* in his view of the subject as the minister was in his—all but told the House that he was not for inquiry into the Indian administration. On this Pitt wrote in severe anger to his colleague, that "the writer hereof and the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot remain in office together. Mr. C. Townshend"—so Pitt always called him—"*must amend his proceeding.*" On this India matter he was determined that his government should stand or fall; he therefore quite approved of a cabinet being held at

Grafton House, "being the house from which firmness, candour, and salvation is to be hoped, if anywhere, in these factious times."

But even in that happy dwelling these blessings were destined not to be found. The council was held, but it only brought divided opinions and distracted plans. Conway and Townshend took one side, and opposed Pitt's plan. Nothing was agreed to, and the "council broke up in confusion." This last behaviour seems to have brought matters to a crisis, and his master determined to dismiss him. He proposed to Lord North to take his place, but that nobleman shrank from so bold a step. Charles knew perfectly what had been intended and how it had failed, and once more had the satisfaction of showing his colleagues that they could get on neither with him nor without him. Henceforward his extravagance was to be wilder than ever; and his behaviour seemed almost justified by this unlucky attempt at driving him out. From that time, however, the great minister seems to have given up his task, in disgust or sheer despair.

Inaccessible as he was at Bath, he was now

doubly so. In vain the Duke of Grafton implored, in vain the king all but commanded. He would do nothing—would see no one. With infinite difficulty, and after an appeal to "his duty and affection," the king got him to give "five minutes" to the Duke of Grafton. He shut himself up once more, moaned over himself, and to all the king's entreaties, renewed in many letters, could only beseech his Majesty humbly to accept his duty with all submission, and implored that for a little time he might be left in repose. The piteous tone of these extraordinary papers would seem incredible to any one who was only acquainted with the traditional and more popular character of the Great Commoner.

On this victory Charles seemed to gain fresh arrogance, and inspired it into others. Lord Charlemont remarked the scandalous and open mutiny and disrespect in the ministerial followers. How no member of the Opposition spoke without abusing Lord Chatham; and how not a single one of his retainers rose to defend him. Charles Townshend, he said, appeared out of humour, but his "discontents

are of no great moment." But with his speech Lord Charlemont was delighted.

In April he brought in his budget, which he did with great skill; yet, even this business-like act was to be tinged with some extravagance. The indulgence of the House was asked for him, as he was ill, and the matter was put off. Yet on that very day he was actually seen walking about the approaches to the House. He had not even the patience to carry out anything like hypocrisy. Though the loss of a shilling on the land tax had caused a serious deficit, yet he contrived to have 140,000*l.* to pay off debts. In fact, he "took" to his office with an interest and eagerness that was not known, and published his "budgets" in a pamphlet shape—a step that was never taken before.

Then came on an economical motion by Grenville, that America should support her own establishment; and here again the Chancellor astonished and delighted the stranger. "I have heard him often; he excelled himself. He harangued most inimitably *on both sides of the question, and in turns was cheered by every party in the House.*" Was there

ever such a picture of brilliant versatility? Not long before, Lord Chesterfield was delighted by an innocent paragraph in the papers, but which had all the force of unconscious sarcasm. "The Right Honourable Charles Townshend has been indisposed of a pain in his side, but *it is not stated in which side.*"

But his behaviour on this question was the most justifiable of all his shifts. For there was one present, Edmund Burke, who interpreted his conduct on a more enlightened principle—as the result of a dawning conviction on a grand question of policy. He was awakening to the fruit of the fatal Stamp Act. But such was the spirit of sophistry that filled him that, when taunted with his change of view, he refused and would not admit it, and it was this extraordinary feat of skilfully balancing himself on a sharp edge, between truth and inconsistency, that delighted and dazzled Mr. Flood. He came up presently and introduced himself to that gentleman, fascinating him by a fresh display of gifts more social in character. And Flood lamenting his ill-luck in having missed

another fine speech, of which the town had talked, the Chancellor made him come to his rooms one morning, and there actually went over the leading points of it, with gesture and declamation. There was enough of vanity here in this display, but surely it was vanity on the surface, and a vanity coloured by *bonhomie* and good-nature.

It was now the beginning of May, and this miserable ministry, each member of which was conscious of his false position, was still tottering on. Their chief, the work of whose hands they were, as Burke in his elegant profanity might have said, was now popularly said to be insane, or at least "odd," and his followers, despising each other, were all taking a separate course. The rash pledge given by the Chancellor was now to be redeemed. It was properly Conway's duty to have brought the American proposal through the House; but he was opposed to it, so the duty was cast upon Townshend. He fixed the 5th of May for its introduction, but on the morning of that day met with an accident, having fallen down and cut his eye. Walpole and others believed that this was a mere excuse—a feint to

avoid an awkward subject. But Sir George Colebrooke, a friend and boon companion, had reason to believe that this was a genuine fit of epilepsy brought on by a debauch of the night before, and through which he had fallen out of bed. Lord North offered to do the duty for him, but the artful Rigby was determined not to be balked of the exhibition, and with pretended compliments, prevailed on the House to wait until Charles was well. He had therefore to go through it, and his boldness carried him over it.

On the 13th of May he brought forward his scheme, which was nearly the same as he had thrown out before. He was for distinguishing between the revolted provinces, and punishing New York. But his project of taxation was a mere trick, and a transparent fallacy. A board of customs was to be constituted at New York; but to soothe the Americans, duties were to be levied only on British goods, while the English merchants were conciliated by having these duties made as light as possible. Even in his own estimate the whole could produce no more than a trifle, reaching to some 35,000*l*. It was al-

most childish; and still more childish to suppose that the Americans would accept such a delusion. They were already tranquillized by the repeal of the Stamp Act, and it was too likely that this fatal measure would produce reaction. There can be no question but that the vanity and rashness of Charles Townshend —not the despotism of Grenville—were the true cause of the great revolt.

And yet this rashness and vanity were dealt tenderly with by opponents; and when, a year later, they tried to undo his work, he lying in his grave, all sides made excuses for him. Trevethick, the alderman, told how he had gone to him, and remonstrated, but Charles "was then warm in the sunshine of majesty," and had pledged himself rashly. "I knew his difficulties," added the alderman. His relative, Tommy Townshend, pleaded for him that he "was urged on by Americans, who said to him, 'Take the tax, but let it have the appearance of port duties.'" There was some justification in this excuse, when we think of the authority of an American, who held this view. It was no other than that of Dr. Franklin, who had been examined before the

House only the year before, and whose opinion, fallacious as it was, must have been in his mind.*

Grenville said, not unkindly, that he was desirous of pleasing all sorts of people. And thus every one extenuated his rashness; and most probably he was eager to please the Court, among the all sorts of people. Burke, his friend, long after, almost fondly dealing with his follies, hinted more plainly than the alderman at the same influences. "The whole body of courtiers drove him on," he said. "To please was the universal object of his life. This fine spun scheme had the usual fate of all exquisite policy. But the original plan of the duties, and the mode of that plan, arose solely from a love of our applause."

This applause he earned triumphantly on this occasion, and his plan was carried through without opposition.

* Franklin had been asked, was there any difference between a duty on importation of goods and an excise on their consumption? "Yes," answered Franklin, "a very material one. An excise you can have no right to lay within our country. But the sea is yours; you maintain by fleets the safety of navigation, and may therefore have a right to some toll towards expense of maintaining the safety of the carriage of goods."

The India question came on, and he absented himself. "Was there ever such a man?" asked Lord Charlemont, naturally, for it was actually a measure of his own department. He then went about growling, abusing his colleagues, saying he would have nothing to do with them, and telling every one he was quite sure of being turned out. The state of things was almost ludicrous; under such trials the strange morbid despondency of the Premier was developing. He was still in his seclusion. There were under-secretaries and spies watching and getting "information." One found out "that he sat all day at table, with his head resting on his hands, without even speaking, not tolerating Lady Chatham in the room, and knocking with a stick when he wanted anything." Another had seen him in a carriage, mournful and miserable, in charge of a servant, who sat beside him; which, said the informant, was very remarkable, considering how he disliked the presence of servants. Surely these were genuine symptoms—symptoms of a morbid sensitiveness, that a very little more would have worked into lunacy. Yet it is plain that his own colleagues assumed

that there was some affectation at the bottom of it. They were ludicrously helpless: the ship was without its captain, the sailors were fighting with each other, and every post brought him imploring letters—and later, letters of a threatening sort. At last the king said plainly that he must provide for his situation; and Mr. Pitt implored his Majesty to do what seemed fit to him, and not consider him in the least.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE CHAMPAGNE SPEECH."

In these times a sort of strange recklessness seems to have come on Charles. Perhaps, he had begun to discover that his "shiftiness" was now almost a disease, which he was helpless to resist, or perhaps he foresaw that he could never hope to "fix" himself. Yet he had no reason to despond. He was plainly uncomfortable in his place, almost as soon as he had settled himself there; but he was young, and life was before him still. It is impossible to shut out the impression that he was losing heart, and that, in fact, he would never rise higher; and this impression he, perhaps, sought to drown in the company at White's and Almack's. But a very

remarkable day was now to come round, when there was to be an exhibition such as that House had rarely witnessed, and when all these feelings were to be published with a sort of indecorum that in him was almost decorum. The enormous weight of Indian matters was on his shoulders, yet he scarcely gave it a thought. It was now May, and he seems to have been quite indifferent.

A few days later the affairs of the India Directors, who had got into collision with the Government about some resolution of their Court in reference to dividends, came before the House.

It brought on a discussion; and, early in the morning, Townshend made a cool, temperate, and sensible speech on the matter, adding, though, in his odd inappropriate way, that he hoped he had atoned for the levity of his past life by the care he had taken of that matter. He also spoke of his own firmness and temper, hinting how much he had had to put up from Lord Chatham during the winter. There was something almost melancholy in this strange confidence, and strange acknowledgment of follies.

"Jerry" Dyson then made a motion of an important character in reference to those dividends, and the careless Chancellor, after hearing its terms, towards four went away indifferently to dine. His party were Sir G. Colebrooke and Sir George Young; yet the whole management of the question rested on him. There was champagne. But while the *insouciant* Chancellor was enjoying himself with his friends, Conway, steadily on the watch, was growing uneasy about the discussion, and again and again sent expresses from the House to fetch him back.

At last, about eight o'clock, he arrived. Walpole says he was half intoxicated with the champagne, and even more so with spirits and ardour. But the gentleman who dined with him says they had had only one bottle among them all. Possibly on such a spirit a little wine of that sort would have a powerful effect. At all events the night was long recollected.

Grenville was speaking as he entered; and as soon as he had done, Charles jumped to his feet, and burst into a surprising harangue, which was long remembered and talked of.

It was evident that a sense of injury was on his mind—a sense of injustice and restraint; with a bitter feeling also that his unsteadiness and lightness had led men to ignore those greater qualities in which he knew he was the master of the mediocrities sitting about him. They now heard a torrent of wit, metaphor, and perhaps lies.

It was the most wonderful speech, whether born of soberness or champagne, that had been heard in that House. It was the most riotous, disjointed, purposeless, brilliant, entertaining piece of personality that was ever known. He actually rose without caring to inquire what was the question, or what had been said when he was away. All he knew was that there was an alarm, and that he was required to come to the rescue. Walpole, who was never tired of recurring to it, summed it up as being "all *apropos* to nothing, and yet about everything—about ministries past, present, and to come, himself in particular. It was all wit and folly, satire and indiscretion." A specimen of the indiscretion, to call it by so mild a name, was his leading off with calling God to witness that he had never been consulted on

the motion—a statement quite false, and the best evidence of the presence of the champagne, as he must have known of at least a dozen persons sitting round him who had helped to draw up the motion in his own room and on his own table that very morning. He then launched into a flood of "wit, parts, humour, knowledge, absurdity, and vanity." He acted with all the grace and ease of comedy, poured out quotations and a torrent of happy and ingenious allusions; played with one subject in the liveliest manner, pranced away to another, and played with it, then relapsed into broad buffoonery. Not for a moment did he approach the question before the House. It was full of an outrageous, yet piquant and most delightful personality. He conveyed to them plainly and with scorn that he was their superior in all things; and with a voice that faltered from wine, dealt out the sharpest strokes, that went to the very heart of every one he attacked. The purport of the whole seemed to be that the Rockingham party were the fittest to make a ministry, but with he himself at its head; but lest they should be inflated by such a recommendation,

he laughed at mere high birth and blood, cried up natural talents and experience, and told those whom he had so preferred that rank was a very different thing from genius, and that they must wait and learn, and not come to power as if forced in a hot-bed. He actually proceeded to speak of his own government as if it had already passed away. He then gave a series of *cartes de visite* of ministers, past and present, touched in the most brilliant and graphic style; sketched off the condition of parties; sneered at titles, birth, and such pretensions; gave ironical praise to Lord Rockingham; openly sneered at Lord Chatham; and in all these personalities insinuated that there was nothing approaching himself or his merits. Finally, he fell on his own government and colleagues, ands aid they had turned into what he had often been charged with being—a weathercock. So marvellous an exhibition of gaiety and versatility was never witnessed. Walpole thought the only thing it could be compared to was Garrick, standing up after a supper, and doing scene after scene out of Congreve. In the midst of it all the patch fell off his eye, and

the injury which had hindered his moving the American question was revealed. It was not so big as a pin's scratch.

But the way the House received it! It was in one roar of rapture. As the inimitable Charles turned from one to the other, and sparkled, and flashed, and saved himself from impertinence by the exquisite point and gay insolence with which he touched everything, men were seen to shout and clap hands in ecstasy of delight, as if they were in a theatre. No wonder Walpole was frantic over it. "He beat," says Horace, "Lord Chatham in language, Grenville in presumption, Rigby in impudence, himself in folly, and everybody in good humour, and if his speech was received with delight, it *was only remembered with pity.*" That was indeed the humiliating view.*

For days afterwards every one was asking every one had they heard the wonderful "champagne speech." Walpole, it has been mentioned, innocently took it to have come

* In Miss Berry's recently published journals will be found the original draught of a burnt letter of Walpole's, which gives a photograph of this curious scene. It is done with great art and pains, and is much fuller than what he gives in his Mémoires.

of the wildness of that drink; but the truth was, it was a piece of his old acting—an *impromptu fait à loisir*—the essence of many bitter meditations, and of a rankling sense of injury. The materials had passed through his mind over and over again. This was the view his friend Sir G. Colebrooke took of it; and this is the view which exactly agrees with what we know of his habits and way of speaking.

On that night, after this display of fireworks, he and a few friends went away to supper at General Conway's. Walpole was of the party; and the exhilaration of success seems to have made it a sort of halcyon night, which, even in all the soberness of historical criticism, he dwells on with fond regret. Never was that wild genius so delightful. He kept them in a roar until past two o'clock, giving them fanciful pictures of everything and everybody, and finally wound up by giving an imitation of his own wife, and of another great lady with whom he pretended to be in love. This latter he took off to the life. With that ended the wonderful evening.

It seems surprising, after that "champagne" burst, that he was allowed to hold on; but

the truth was, there was no one to turn him out, or no one with power or courage to attempt such a task. By the end of June he was openly saying that he was going to resign, and even that he was about being turned out—but neither event took place.

Still this wonderful genius, in spite of such disorganization, contrived to carry through an Indian measure, which, if only temporary, was still in keeping with the spirit of what *he* had originally proposed. The Company were to have two years' grace, and to pay 400,000*l.* a year to the Crown. This was an agreement—a compromise, and what he had always insisted on.

Yet, on this arrangement being completed, the Chancellor, "Tom Tilbury," was heard to say, "that it was no advice of his, his opinion went not with it"—stating this publicly in the House. Some of the intriguers, who were planning a new government, were very eager to turn this slight to profit. It was to be urged on him that, after the "public disapprobation" heaped on him in the House of Lords by his own colleague, "he would only disgrace himself by acting with them. Lord Hardwicke

artfully suggested that this should be put to him. "I really think that these topics, urged skilfully, and while they are warm from the debate, may have a good effect upon him; at least, I am sure the trial is worth making." Lord Rockingham did not, however, think the trial worth making; and it is certain that, in the negotiations now going on, he was but little considered. He was indeed wise to stand alone. The jobbers and intriguers about him were so busy with their schemes, and so selfishly engrossed, that they took no thought of this important element. Perhaps they fancied by their grand combination they could do without him altogether. But it was believed that he had a support which they could not reckon. The *rapprochement* between him and the Court had been drawing closer every day; the king, it was plain, had a partiality for him; and it was more than probable that, on the breaking up of the ship, he would be the leader. One of his own intimates (Sir G. Colebrooke) was convinced of this. A "weathercock" first minister would have been a strange and dangerous spectacle.

To the end his fluctuations and extrava-

gances were as extravagant as ever; but still they were open, and there was no deceit. Only a month before his death, he told Rigby, with *effusion*, that he would never rest until "he got him and all his friends in." When he had obtained a peerage for his wife, on the very day that she kissed hands, he told the same politician that he would resign, unless they gave him a peerage. On the next day he said that a peerage had been offered to him by the king! This was all gasconade, and a morbid constitutional gasconade, which in the main meant nothing.

All this while, innumerable intrigues were going on. There are in existence now one hundred and sixty-three skeleton plans of administration, the work of the plotters of his time. The Rigbys and Bedfords, Rockinghams and Grenvilles, were all busy. One secret scheme was for a coalition of Grenvilleites, Rockinghams, and Bedfords; and the parts were all written out on a sort of political play-bill. But a more crafty schemer proposed leaving out all the Rockinghams, except Yorke, and filling up with the "king's friends;" that is, adds the constructor, "if

Charles Townshend will agree." It was, indeed, being whispered about that Charles was meditating being chief of a new government, though Lord Mansfield ridiculed the idea heartily. It was on the cards. Meanwhile, the intrigues went on. The distracted state of the Government was amusingly illustrated by the case of an Irish lady, who wished to beg the life of a servant left for execution. She applied to Lord Hertford, who said he did not know how things were, and could not make any request. From him she went to Conway, who told her he was "out;" and from him to Shelburne, who said he was not "in;" and so the man was left to be hanged. Charles meanwhile hearing of the plots about him, went straight to Rigby, and told him that he had heard he was proscribed by the duke. That artful schemer answered him that such was so far from being the case, that Lord Rockingham had never even mentioned his name, only that he, Rigby, had reminded them that there was such a person in the world as Mr. Charles Townshend. From another authority, we know that Rigby had given out, in the name of the "Bloomsbury Gang,"

that "not one of the present Cabinet should be saved." Some one said, "What! not Charles Townshend?" "That is a different thing," said Rigby. "Besides, he was in opposition." "So was Conway," was the retort. "But Conway," said Rigby, "is Bute's man." "Pray," said the other, "is not Charles Townshend also Bute's man?" "Ay, but Conway is governed by his brother (Lord Hertford), who *is* Bute's man." "So is Charles Townshend governed by *his* brother." "But Conway is married to a Scotchwoman." "So is Townshend." Thus the odd discussion ended. This speech would have worked on him, and filled him with anger. Yet, in other respects, he was prospering. The old Duchess of Argyll had died, and had left her daughter, Lady Dalkeith—now Baroness Greenwich—some three thousand a year, and the best judges had considered that he was on, not the high road—for there is none such in politics,—but on the narrow footpath—which leads to the Premiership. But the Bedfords and Rockinghams fell out as to terms,—the negotiation broke down, and the duke remained in office.

He was always paying court to the "City" people, and in this month received the freedom, in a gold box, to the great amazement of his friends. Verses even were made on the subject; for it seemed new, and almost a burlesque, that he should come out in the grave character of *Civis Romanus*:

> "The joke of Townshend's box is little known;
> Great judgment in the thing the cits have shown.
> This casket was an expedient clever
> To rid them of the like expense for ever.
> Be so burlesque a choice th' example sure,
> That City boxes must all lying cure."

In July "Single-speech" Hamilton had heard that Townshend was confident that the whole ministry would break up, and that he himself would be at the head of the Treasury. But he was already ill, and with this illness on him obeyed a summons to the king's closet, with whom he was shut up a long time. He spoke very plainly to his Majesty, telling him, if anything like "stability" could be got he was willing to go on; but otherwise would have nothing to do with any "patching"—a word which remained on the king's mind as something grotesque.

In this tumult of intrigue and discontent, his mind, it is plain, was not at ease. There can be no question that even with all the lightness and impetuous vacillation which has fatally stamped him with the air of an adventurer, he felt that in this miserable complexity of the present politics there was no room for his genius. Perhaps he despaired of any issue, or perhaps had a sensation that he was already hopelessly *manqué*, that it was idle for him to struggle against the reputation of being the Dalgetty of politics, and that men all through his life *would* set him down as a clever, unscrupulous, brilliant, but unreliable and scarcely respectable politician. Yet there was encouragement in what he must have felt was the strength of his power. He had been able to secure a peerage for his wife, and the splendid office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for his brother. There were other difficulties gathering about him; his means were crippled, and a growing taste for wine and dissipation was making him its slave. Still he was young and brilliant as ever, and could do much still.

Illness must have been on him when he made that dismal retrospect in the House of

a life so purposeless, and unstable as water. Some of that crowd of under-secretaries *in posse* or *in esse*, who earned their crust by purveying for their "great men" all items that could be discovered, wrote eagerly how "it was noticed that Mr. Charles was looking very ill indeed." Some had spoken to his wife, who said she believed there was nothing wrong with him, except, indeed, that he was in very low spirits. This was at the close of August; but Sir William Duncan, a doctor, who was at last called in, pronounced that all this time he had been carrying about with him a low, putrid fever, which, though not dangerous, might at any moment become fatal. Still the buoyant Charles went about, would not "give in;" and it was discovered at last by one of the Secretary scouts that he *had* gone to bed, but only from precaution. But very soon the fever had taken that fatal turn the doctor foresaw. His mind in an eddy of agitation, his constitution inflamed by a too free course of life, he was the worst subject in the world for such an attack. The doctor might have put the same question to him as Goldsmith's had so acutely

put to *him* on his death-bed. But nothing could exceed the charming equanimity—the easy "good humour" if it might be so called —with which he received the fatal news that he was not to recover. Friends remarked with wonder that he, who through all his life had been so fretful if crossed even in a trifle, could now welcome his unexpected death with an easiness worthy of a Roman philosopher. It is no uncharitableness to say that he belonged to a school of reckless men, by whom the aids and comforts of religion would not have been too eagerly sought. Setting this view apart, it is pleasant to think of this brilliant creature withdrawing from the scene where his treasure and his heart were, with the old delightfulness, and a gaiety and good humour which showed that to the end he was genuine and consistent. And with the first week in September he had shuffled off that mortal coil and political tangle in which Butes, and Newcastles, and Pitts, and Rockinghams, and a hundred such strands were twisted in such hopeless confusion.

Of such a character none of us can now reasonably take a harsh view. For hack-

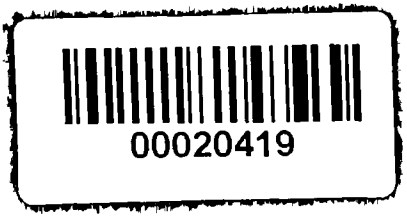
neyed charges of being unscrupulous, shifty, or dishonest, according to the loosely indulgent political morals of the time, cannot be sustained. The reader who has followed his fitful course will have discovered that his changes were the changes, not of selfishness or interest, but of impulse, or, at the worst, of humour; and very frequently of a mistake in judgment, which he was too open and outspoken to think of concealing. He was even not as Macaulay has called him, "the most versatile of mankind,"—a quality that supposes a sort of discipline and regulation of the intellect. It has indeed been fashionable to associate his character exclusively with the lighter and more *mousseux* qualities of the mind, but there were substantial gifts for which he has not been given credit. His political views and his political measures show a depth and soberness of colour, and his letters, as the reader will have remarked, are in a close, almost nervous style, with a vigorous turn of expression. But his best epitaph is the affectionate tribute of Edmund Burke, who, after dwelling on his memory with the tenderness with which he

would have made allowance for the follies of a petted youth, said to the Commons, "he was truly the child of our House. *He never thought, did, or said anything, but with a view to you.* He every day adapted himself to your disposition, and adjusted himself before it, as at a looking-glass."

The friendship and sorrowful affection of Burke is indeed extenuation for many follies —follies perhaps like those of Sterne, more of the head than of the heart. A friend who knew him well passes no less lightly over his frailties. "As a private man," writes Sir G. Colebrooke, "his friends said they would never see his like again. *Though often the butts* of his wit, they returned to his company with fresh delight; which they would not have done had there been malice in what he said."

Walpole, who admired his gifts almost to extravagance, could not bring his bitter soul to a tame and indulgent view where there was a question of closing a chapter smartly and brilliantly. The Wit of Strawberry Hill is just and happy, too, when he says, that the deceased Charles had "every great talent and

little quality." But the reader who has followed this strange being's career with me, will scarcely join in the harsh censure that he wanted "common truth, common honesty, common sincerity, common steadiness, and common sense."



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